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My dear Mr. [illegible]

I have just received your letter of the 14th inst.

and am glad to hear that you are well.

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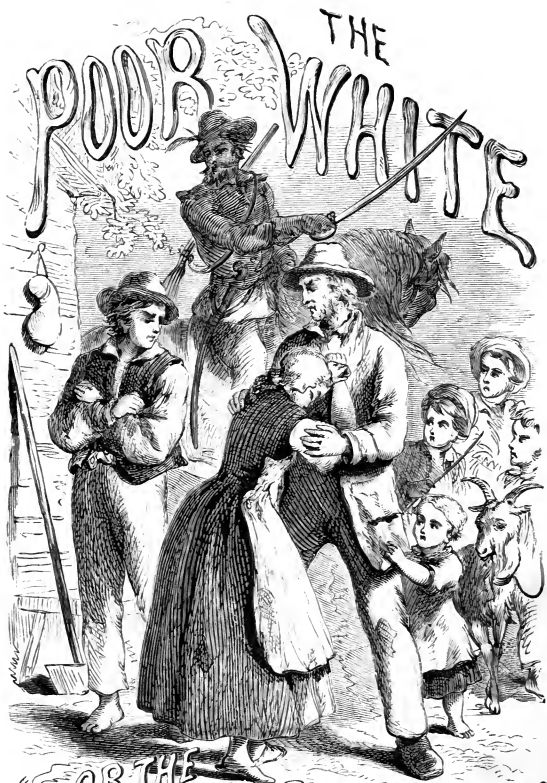
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The poor white. 1864.

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OR THE
REBEL CONSCRIPT

FRONTISPIECE.

JOHN W. HILL

1874

1874

1874

THE
POOR WHITE;

OR,

The Rebel Conscript.

BY THE
AUTHOR OF "RUTH'S SACRIFICE; OR, LIFE ON THE
RAPPAHANNOCK."



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THE POOR WHITE;

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I.

TROUBLE IN THE CABIN.

THE land!" exclaimed Mrs. Betty Dean, the 'Piny Woods' woman, "if there aint a sure-enough kerridge!"

"Who can it be?" called out little Tomtit, the wide-awake of the cabin group.

"Nobody comin' here, I reckon," slowly said Mr. Dean, who sat smoking in the chimney-corner, a sensible man, but sheepish.

"But there is, I tell you," replied Mrs. Dean, earnestly; "there's a kerridge with a bad looking man in it. I reckon he's a nigger-buyer, an' they ain't a mite 'ticular, for

if they don't make out a load of blacks, they'd just as lief take along some 'poor whites.' There, as true as I live an' breathe, he's stopped, and he'll come in. Scud an' hide, chil'en."

Lottie, John, and Tomtit crept under the bed, while Elsie, Bill, and Snipe burst out the door, which was on the side of the cabin opposite the road, or rather cart-path, which passed near their dwelling; a window, made by leaving out a log in building, gave Mrs. Dean a full view of the dreaded stranger.

Scarcely were the three children last-named safely hidden in the juniper thicket near by, when the intruder appeared at the door, whip in hand.

"Halloa! woman. Can you tell me the way tow * Turner's Cross Roads?"

"Yis, indeed," replied Mrs. Dean, much relieved, but scarcely knowing what she said. "You jest step out intow the road, an' I'll

* Tow, — a provincialism of some parts of the South, used even by persons of culture.

tell you all about it." Then as the man, whose name was Workfork, disappeared around the house, she stepped to the window, and said, loudly, "Keep right on follerin' your face till you come tow two roads, an' mind you don't take both on 'em."

"Jimminny! how could I be fool enough to do that?" exclaimed he. "Tell us what you mean, woman?" continued he, sternly.

"Couldn't you start on one road, an' think you was wrong, an' turn back an' take the t'other?"

"Which of the two shall I take?" asked Workfork.

"The right one, until you come tow two roads that runs kriss-cross like, an' them's Turner's Cross Roads," said Mrs. Dean.

"Never shall find the place from sech a direction," said Workfork; "can't you send a boy with me to show me?"

"Haint nary chick tow send; you can't help finding it, though: keep to the right all the way;" and she drew a long breath of re-

lief, as Workfork stepped into the carry-all and drove off. Soon the children crept from their hiding-places, like chickens terrified by a hawk.

"Deary me!" exclaimed Mrs. Dean, "how scart I be! Is you all here? Let's see: Lottie, Johnny, Elsie, Bill, Tomtit, an' Snipe, but where's Sam?"

"Why," replied Johnny, "don't you know? He's gone to bring home the goat; it's his turn, you know."

This family, with a thoughtfulness rare among poor whites, had bought a goat, which was tethered at the nearest grassy spots, and when night came, was led home to be milked, and tied near the door of the cabin.

"Yes," said the mother, anxiously, "an' he will meet that dreadful man, an' I reckon he'll tote him off. It's high time Sam an' the goat was hum. I'll jist step out an' see if they is comin'." The mother went around the corner of the cabin, followed by her children, and at a little distance down the road was

goaty, trudging homeward, looking as forlorn as she could.

"Sakes alive!" screamed Mrs. Dean, "the goat is comin' all alone, for all the world! Where is Sam? Oh, Sam! Sam!" and the woods echoed with her calls.

"What's to pay naou?" moderately called Mr. Dean, from the log aperture.

"That are man has carried off our Sam, I'll lay he has!" cried Mrs. Dean.

"I shouldn't wonder," replied the father, still puffing smoke.

"Run, run, then, all on 'ye!" shouted Mrs. Dean; "*dad run too!* Oh, do run! Don't let him 'slave one of us white folks!" and she started down the cart-path of the pine-wood after the vehicle. In a few moments she stopped, overcome with emotion and panting for breath; and soon after, the whole troop of children, headed by Lottie, came up, and the mother wildly sent them on, telling them to stop the carriage and save Sam, for in her distress she scarcely knew what she said or

did. Mr. Dean now joined her, and began to reason with her about the vain attempt of trying to recover the boy.

"What's the use o' trying to git him back?" said he, in a despairing tone. "Sam can't be worse off, an' he'll be better off, like as not, if he is a slave. He's got to do suthin' or *starve*, an' I'm 'bleeged tow them that starts him, if they is kidnappers. I wish I'd been stole myself, when I was a youngster, rather than live this 'ere half-an'-half life. If Sam's gone, there's one less to feed, an' one less to beg old clothes of the slaves."

"The land!" exclaimed Mrs. Dean; "do you think I'll let a slave-driver have one of my children? I'd tear his eyes out fust. Come, Dean, if you've got any spunk left, show it for oncet an' bring back our Sam."

"What's the use?" returned the disheartened husband, folding his arms, and sitting down on a rotten log beside the cart-path. "There aint any hope we shall ever be any better off. The rich 'uns wont employ us,

they've got people 'nuff who work without pay. The land owes us a living. All we ken do is to raise a leetle corn, steal more, beg butter-milk, an' bring up our chil'en to be thieves an' beggars. I'd rather be in States Prisin, by half."

"Well, I don't much wonder," replied Mrs. Dean. "But I shall try my best to keep up a little courage; can't do nothin' without *that*, you know. I ken pray, an' I do believe the Lord he'll deliver us somehow."

"I used to think so," said Mr. Dean; "I never prayed myself, but arter that are Methodist camp-meetin' we tended, when we was fust married, I made lots of 'count of your prayers, but nothin's come of 'em yit, an I've made up my mind there aint nothin' in religion; it's all moonshine."

"'Siah Dean!" exclaimed the wife, "be done with that talk; I'll hear anything but slurs at my religion. I tell you there is suthin' to it; I feel it at my heart, and I know God will help us yet. You'll live to see it."

"I shall live over the same old miserable life, and never see nothin' better," said Mr. Dean.

"Dear me," exclaimed Mrs. Dean, "what a scarry man you be!"

"If there'd been a God in heaven, as you say," said Mr. Dean, "he'd a-saved the slaves afore this time in answer to their prayers. I've heard you pray, wife, like a minister: but you can't begin with the old, pious slaves; an' I say if there had been any God, he'd a-heard 'em afore now."

"I believe he'll hear 'em yit, in his own good time," replied Mrs. Dean.

"Mebbe not," said the broken-spirited husband. "I'd ruther take my chance with 'em, however, as they be, than with the poor whites."

"Well, I don't want our Sam to be toted off whar we can't never see him ag'in," said the mother.

"It'll be of no 'arthly use," said the other, "if we do try to git him. If he's toted off by

that are slave-ketcher, we can't help it; an' if we could, I don't know as we ought to. By my reck'nin', Sam, he'll be lots happier a slave than a poor white."

"Why, Dean, how you do talk!" exclaimed the troubled wife; "don't we belong to one of the fust families in Virginny? Mebbe we shall yit git up in the world ag'in, and be respectable; who knows?"

"Yis, Betty, we come down to our low place from a high family, a rich family. My grandfather was a wealthy slave-owner, an' all my great grandfathers was, of course. My father, you know, was raised in idleness, got tow be a drunkard, spent his property, died a young man, leavin' his children to take their level with the poor whites, 'an here we is, poorer than the crows."

"I wish my heart there warn't a slave in the land," cried Mrs. Dean.

"Yis, we may well say that. There'd be a chance for us then to git a footin' in the world. Then our boys could all have trades,

for there'd be work enough, an' it would be fashionable to work, and our gals could go tow school and larn tow read. Yis, there'd be some hope fur us if there wa'n't no slaves ; but there is slaves, an' it's my mind there alus will be, an' there aint no chance fur such as we be. It's no use ; we must die as we be, thieves and beggars."

"I can't stop no longer, indeed can't I," exclaimed Mrs. Dean, having recovered her breath. "I shan't never git Sam back at this rate."

"It'll be of no 'arthly use," replied the husband, "but we may as well see to the rest of the children. If the slave buyer'd kidnap Sam, he'd make no bones 'stealin' more on 'em if he sees 'em."

"Oh, dear, so he would ! I never thought of that," groaned the wife, more alarmed than ever. In a few moments, the double quick pace of the parents brought them up with the children, who, having reached the two forks of the roads, could not tell which to take.

"Scud for the cabin, chicks," shouted Mrs. Dean, "or the man'll tote you off!" and away they ran, as fleet as deer. "Now," continued the wife, "you go one road, an' I'll go t'other, an' we'll git Sam anyhow."

"It'll be of no 'arthly use," replied Mr. Dean, "but I ken go to satisfy you."

II.

WHERE'S SAM?

WHEN the children reached the cabin, there stood the goat quietly nibbling the scattered tufts of grass, just as if nothing had happened.

"Why, Pinky," said Lottie, addressing the animal, "how could you come home without Sam? You mean thing! I wouldn't stir foot to milk you if it wasn't fur supper."

"Maa!" said the goat, in defence.

The little tribe burst into fits of laughter at this.

"Yes," said Lottie, "I don't doubt it. You've the same excuse for everything, — 'Maa!'"

"Cracky! I wish Pinky could talk for once, and tell us what she see, don't you?" said John, to Lottie.

"If she wur eatin' grass, she couldn't see nuffin'," said Tomtit, whose delight it was to take the opposite view of things; "course she couldn't."

"Leave Pinky alone fur that," said Lottie; "she knows lots. She ken eat an' see too; can't you, Pinky?" The creature stopped grazing, and actually rubbed her head against Lottie's tattered dress, which the kind girl interpreted in her favor.

"She says, 'Yes,'" said Lottie.

"Poh! poh!" said John; "she says she wants you to hurry an' milk her."

"No, no," called out Tomtit; "she say why don't you go an' find Sam? Great case you be to find folks! If I'd had my way, I'd found him afore now."

"Why didn't you then?" asked John.

"'Cause you wouldn't let me; didn't I tell you I seed kerridge-tracks on that right-hand road?"

"Yis, an' there was tracks on t'other too," said Lottie.

"Well, ye see, the kerridge went down one

road, turned round, an' went on the right-hand one fur good, an' I told ye so, an' if we'd kept on, we'd found him afore now, I reckon."

"Dad ur mam'll find him, I reckon," said John.

"If they don't," said Lottie, "I'll tell you what, boys; I'll go till I find him!"

"You!" cried Tomtit. "You'd look putty, gwine through the woods arter Sam! How long would it be afore you'd be kidnapped yourself?"

"Hush, Tommy!" said Lottie; "I must milk Pinky, fur it's gittin' dark, an' it's time we was safe in the house."

"Wait, let me tie her fust," said John.

"What's the use of tying the goat, when she stands still without?" asked Tomtit; so the children clustered around Lottie and the goat, as the milking went on, all chattering like blackbirds, and hoping for the best as it regarded Sam, with the exception of Tomtit, who "bleeved he was toted off, sure 'nuff."

It was a sad and touching sight to see that

family group. Americans they were, like ourselves,—but Americans reared almost in barbarous life. Not one of them had ever seen the inside of a school-room, or been to Sabbath school or to church. Their mother was a Christian woman, but could not read; neither could the father. Think of it: what a home that must be without one book in it! Of course the Bible was out of the question, and as no minister had happened there for the last twelve years, and she had no Christian friends, Mrs. Dean, in her ignorance and darkness, had her ideas of right and wrong strangely mingled. She even came to think it was right for her children to help themselves to corn and potatoes from the fields of the wealthy planters, whose lands bordered the pine forest. She reasoned thus; or rather she adopted her husband's logic: "If the rich men would free their slaves, and hire us, right smart glad would we be to work; but as they keep us down by holding slaves, we must live, and they in part owe us a living. We must do as well as we can."

It is hardly possible to conceive of a more wretched abode than the Dean cabin. The earth was the floor, and as there was only one bedstead, two corners of the room had ticks filled with straw and dry leaves to serve the purpose of beds. Bed-clothing they had none, for it was the custom of the family to turn in, "like a hog in armor," without undressing. Mrs. Dean was an energetic, wide-awake woman, and not quite reconciled to this state of things. Unlike the poorest of the poor whites, she had a loom and spinning-wheel, and spun and wove all the cotton and wool she could get, and made the cloth into garments for her needy household, but she could not keep them comfortably clad. The one suit apiece for the year would get very ragged, with all her mending and patching, before the year came round. She was continually devising ways and means to improve their condition, but to little purpose. Herself and household were under the Juggernaut wheel of the Slave Power, and what availed their efforts to get free?

But Mrs. Dean was a true Christian although an ignorant one, and she prayed over her troubles, and tried to do her best to bring up her children aright. She did not expect much for them in this world, but she determined to aid them to the utmost, in coming to Christ, that they might secure the riches of heaven. She was almost untaught herself, knowing only a few passages of Scripture, the Lord's Prayer, and "Now I lay me down to sleep;" but these she diligently taught her children, and that humble home was in truth far more blessed than the princely abodes of the neighboring planters.

Why?

Because poor Mrs. Dean loved and trusted in her Saviour, and because he made her happy with the blessing of his spirit,—with his own gracious presence. It was not the outward appearance that Jesus looked at, when he stooped to listen to this good woman's petitions, it was the heart that he regarded; and seeing there a childlike and trusting dispo-

sition, humble and contrite, this was to him of great price, and he gave her the smiles of his countenance, which made that dim dwelling, at times, radiant with peace.

Mrs. Dean, like some Christians in more favored circumstances, thought that children could not be early brought to the Saviour. She had never in all her life heard the passage "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven;" if she had, I am sure she would have encouraged her little ones to come at once. As it was, she sowed the seed, repeating to them the simple story of the cross over and over again, and in such earnest, soul-moving terms as always interested them. In substance it was this: we are all sinners; and when we could not help ourselves at all, Jesus Christ, God's only Son, came down from heaven and died for us, so that we can be forgiven. Now whosoever will, may come to him and be saved from hell.

It was this mother's first ambition to have

her children Christians. "If they fail of doing much in this life," prayed she, "let them not fail of heaven!" She expected, however, that they would give their hearts to Christ when they became older, and in this it was according to her faith; for one by one when they reached the age at which she looked for it, they yielded their hearts to him.

Lottie, seventeen, and Sam, two years younger, had thus chosen the good part, an interest in Christ, which, if they proved faithful, could never be taken away from them. Next, it was Mrs. Dean's ambition to have her children learn to read and write, and acquire an honest trade, that they might have the means of subsistence. In this, she was very far before the mass of the poor whites, being elevated by her religion.

Lottie finished milking the goat, and John and Tomtit gathered grass for its food for the night, and placed it at the foot of a pine beside the cabin; then tying it securely, they all went in and ate supper. This consisted

of a half-gill of milk each, measured in a clam-shell, and a bit of cold ash pone. Neither did they complain at their stinted fare, but pleasantly took it as a matter of course, John wondering how the poor children got along who had no goat, and Lottie saying, "We ought to be thankful for this nice ash pone, it is so well salted and baked." Then Elsie, Bill, and Snipe went to bed, being tired out with chasing butterflies and each other, in the woods all day, and the three older ones stationed themselves at the long window, to watch for the coming of their father and mother.

Two classes of insects kept their attention awake, — the fire-flies and the musquitoes. They really seemed to vie with each other; the one class, by their splendid show of fireworks, lightening now this twig, now that, and the other singing for an accompaniment a blood-thirsty war-whoop.

"How them are lightnin' bugs do fire up," exclaimed Tomtit; "you can't do that, John."

“I don’t think I shall try,” replied John, laughing.

“Hear them are skeeturs yell,” said Tomtit again. “Wont they half eat us up to-night?”

“I wonder dad and mam don’t come!” said Lottie, straining her eyes to see impossibilities down the cart-path.

At length, late in the evening, Mr. and Mrs. Dean returned, being unsuccessful in the search. On inquiry at the nearest cabin, three miles distant, the mother found that the carriage had passed three hours before, and mourning for her lost boy, she languidly plodded toward home, meeting her husband on the way; for finding that the carriage had turned back on the road he had taken, he retraced his steps to join his wife.

“Oh, dad, mam, didn’t you find Sam?” cried the three oldest children, in a breath.

“No,” said the mother; “we must pray the Lord to take care of him!” and sadly the family went to their rest.

III.

WHAT WAS BEHIND THE BLACK CURTAIN.

WORKFORK had driven only a short distance from the cabin when he met Sam taking home the goat. His head was hatless, and covered with a tangled mass of brown curls. The warm winter suit which his mother, at great pains, had made him the year before, still hung to him in patches. As he came in sight of the carry-all, he was whistling a Virginia reel, which air he had caught from a slave of a plantation near by. Workfork stopped his horses.

"Hallo, youngster, see here. I'm in a quandary, and I want you to help me out."

"What's to pay now?" asked Sam, nothing daunted.

"I've lost my way. I want to go to Turner's Cross Roads; can you show me?"

"Yes, indeed, I know the way," replied Sam. "Jest let me take the goat home."

"Oh, no," said Workfork, "can't wait for that; business is urgent. The goat will do well enough; jump right in, I'll pay you well," and almost before he knew it, Sam had let go his hold of the rope by which he led the goat, and was lifted into the carriage.

Workfork was very pleasant to Sam, plying him with oranges and candy, "goodies" which the boy had never before tasted.

After they had rode a half-dozen miles, Sam, having pointed out the right road, told him that he was now ready to go back.

"Oh, no," said Workfork, "not yet; it'll be pitch dark afore you git half home. Keep along with me; you'll have a good trip, plenty to eat, and you'll git home all in good time."

"Much obleeged," said Sam, "but it's time I was gwine; stop them are hosses, wont ye?"

"No, sir," replied Workfork, savagely, "I

ruther think not ; I'm bound to have my way fur a piece. How should sich a youngster as you be, know when it's best to go hum? If I should let you go, and a big bear should ketch you an' eat you up, government would make me pay the damage, and ye see, young cub, you can't come it. I don't intend to turn you over to the panthers and wild-cats to-night."

Sam saw it was no use demurring, and accordingly kept quiet. His suspicions, however, were aroused, that all was not right, and he determined to start early the next morning, and run home. He now discovered that the carry-all had other occupants besides the driver and himself. As it grew dusk, Workfork slid a black curtain in the back of the vehicle, and there sat an old slave woman and two little white boys, five and three years old.

"That's the bedroom," said he ; "climb in there and go to sleep, youngster." Sam obeyed the first direction ; the last, under the circumstances, was likely to take some time.

"See here, old woman," roughly called out

Workfork, "have you blackened them are boys' faces?"

"I done tried to, massa," said Chainy, "but de cork wa'n't burnt right; I couldn't make 'em black. 'Pears like it wouldn't stick, deir complexion so clar-like."

"Nonsense," said he; "always ready with yer excuses. Well, here's plenty more; see if you ken give 'em a leetle more ebony tinge now;" and he opened a tin box in which were quantities of burnt cork.

"If you don't black 'em up well," continued he, fiercely, "you'll ketch one rare mauling, old crone, that's all." Sam shrank frightened into the corner of the carry-all, wondering and dreading what would come next.

Meanwhile, poor old Chainy, taking little Frank on her knee, began rubbing his face with the cork.

"You be done," exclaimed the little boy; "I wont be black."

"De man says you must," said Chainy; "he whip you awful, if you don't let me smooch your face."

"Can I wash it off, mammy?" whispered Frank. She was his old nurse, and he called her by this endearing title.

"Yis, honey, right smart quick, when we gits tow the creek," and away she rubbed, face, neck, ears, hands, and arms, until not a vestige of white was to be seen. Then, putting down Frank on the seat, she took up little Hal, two years younger. He, the pet of a fine old mansion, "the baby," "the pearl," "the silver dove," the "my precious" of the mother, was to be blackened to be sold as a slave! Little did that mother think that day, when she sent Chainy to walk in the park with her two little boys, of the evil that would befall them.

Once there was a man who found a frozen viper in the fields in winter. He carried it home, warmed and brought it to life, fed and made a pet of it. But scarcely had he commenced caressing it, when it basely bit him! Yes, bit its benefactor! So it is with all sin and vice. They are like venomous snakes;

they bite most fatally those who nourish them. The father and mother of these little boys believed in slavery. They said that they could prove from the Bible that it was right to hold slaves, and quieted their consciences and kept their slaves by such reasoning. But little did they think that their principles would be thus tested. They had forgotten that God is no respecter of persons; they had forgotten the Saviour's great rule of action: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Ah, it was no worse for their little children to be enslaved than for the children of their poor colored neighbor. And if slavery is a divine institution in the light of this law, we must expect the different races to take turns in enduring its penalty.

Little Hal was a darling boy, however, and it did seem too bad to make a slave of him. Old Chainy thought so as she rubbed on the blacking. She thought, too, of her own dear little boy of long ago, who had

been lost, and Sam saw her tears fall thick and fast. Sam's eyes watered at that, and in spite of himself, he could not help his own tears from coming.

"Got through there?" called out Workfork, putting his head within the curtain.

"Yis, massa," tremblingly replied Chainy.

"But you haven't blacked the youngster;" thus he called Sam. "Make him black as the ace of spades, hair and all; do you hear, Chainy?"

"Yis, massa;" and Chainy turned to Sam, with the burnt cork in her hand, as Workfork withdrew his head, and gave his horses a cut with his whip.

"I got to be black?" asked Sam, in amazement. "I wont, though; what's I done? I sha'n't stand it, indeed wont I;" and with a summerset and a flourish of heels, in some unheard-of way he was out of the carriage in hot haste. He fell tumbling into a ditch, and was so much hurt that he could not make his escape as he had planned; so all Workfork

had to do was to stop and pick him up, giving him a few blows with the whip.

"Villyun!" he called out, "try that game agin, an' I'll trounce you within an inch of your life."

Sam was a boy of great spirit for a poor white, and it was with no little sacrifice of pride that he submitted to be colored. Aunt Chainy coaxed and coaxed.

"Ye see, honey," said she, "if you don't let me do't, he'll beat me at de whippin'-post;" this availed more than his own fears, and so he sat still while the good old woman fitted him up for sale.

"What does he want you to do this for? What is he gwine to do with us?" whispered Sam.

"Oh, don't ask," returned Chainy, mournfully; "I reckons he gwine to sell us all."

"What can I do?" asked Sam.

"De Lord knows, Chainy don't," said the poor woman; "p'raps you pray an' he'll deliver you. I'se hearn tell of sich things."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Workfork, not hearing their talk, putting his head within the curtain, "that's the go! a curly-headed nigger! sell for \$1200; that's what I call a spec." Then, turning back to attend to his driving, his eye fell upon a black boy, a slave of ten years old, plodding along by the roadside. The slave-driver was desirous of adding him to his list of stolen articles. The boy had been sent on an errand to another plantation, and had in his hand a written "pass" or permission to go. Workfork stopped and called out to him.

"Hello, you young rascal, what you running away for?"

The boy smiled, and held out his pass for answer.

"Here, let me read it," said Workfork; the boy handed it to him. It was as follows:

"Let the boy Rafe pass and repass from Wakefield to Holderness. William Schorman.

"Wakefield, Tuesday morning."

"Oh, well," said the dealer, "I'm gwine right there by another road. Jump in, I ken carry you as well as not."

Rafe had never been offered a ride in his life, and he looked incredulously at his new friend.

"Git in this minute, you young villyun;" and accustomed to obey the stern word of command, Rafe climbed into the carry-all, and was borne rapidly away.

"I wonder whose turn'll come next," thought Sam.

IV.

STRANGE USE OF MRS. DEAN'S COWHIDE SHOES.

IT was little that Mrs. Dean slept, the night after Sam was missing. She wept and prayed much, and Lottie, often awaking, heard her sobs and her low-voiced prayer, in which this Christian daughter joined with all her heart. Mr. Dean and the rest of the family slept on soundly. He made much of his sleep, and often said that it was all the comfort he had. A drink of whiskey and a nap served to drown his trouble; he could not live without strong drink and sound sleep.

The next day, mother and daughter were stirring with the earliest dawn. The morning came in the most sombre of drab quaker hues, not even having the taste to throw a pink scarf over her shoulders. An ugly cowl of dark gray quite hid her face,—no white nor

blue was to be seen ; in fact, her dress was in half-mourning goods. 'Gradually vapors took wings from the vast swamps that bordered the rivers far and near, and brooded like a pall over the tree-tops, then, descending and drifting in by the slight current of air, everything visible and invisible was enveloped in a dense cloud of moisture.

"I am so sorry to see a storm brewin'," said Mrs. Dean, as she struck a flint over tinder, to kindle a fire.

"Perhaps it will clar up, 'an' the sun burst through bimeby," hopefully suggested Lottie.

"I hope so too," said the mother ; "but I see yisterday that the water biled out of the kittle 'mazin' quick, an' that's a sure sign that a storm is brewin' in the sky."

"Mother, what's to be done 'bout Sam?" asked Lottie.

"Suthin' must be done," replied the mother, earnestly ; "'twont do to give it up in this way. We must all go to huntin' for him. You know, Lottie"—here the tinder caught, and

the dry leaves and bits of pitch-pine together blazed up cheerily in the big fireplace, built of sticks and clay,—“that our Sam is high-spirited as a wild horse, an’ he wont be toted off without showin’ fight, an’ I’ve been thinkin’ what if he’s left somewhere half-killed by that are wicked man. We must some of us go to-day and find him. I rather think I shall go myself. If I do, I shall make a business of it and not come back till I find him.”

“Mother, let me go,” said Lottie. “If any-thing should happen to you, what would become of father and the children? I aint of much ’count noways, an’ I ken be spared jist as well as not.”

“I’ll think it over,” replied the mother, as she stirred the corn-meal, salt, and water together to the consistency of ash-pone dough.

Lottie then taking the gourd, which hung in the corner near the fireplace, went out to milk the goat, her thoughts busy with leaving home to find her brother.

Gradually the fog canopy lifted, and the

sun beamed through the curtains of clouds, and shimmered his beams down into the woods, in little patches of glory. Lottie felt the change, as she sat there on the pine log milking Pinky.

"It's gwine to be a good day to travel, after all," thought she. "Now if I ken only find Sam, an' help get him home!"

As she went in, the ash pones were ranged on the hot hearth, nicely baking by the fire. The children were getting up out of their nests of straw, and as they were dressed the night before, they had no long process to go through; but their mother would insist that they should go to the creek and wash their faces and hands before breakfast, so the morning salutation was uniformly,—

"Run, chicks, an' git washed and aired, fur the ash pone is a'most ready. Scud!"

Mr. Dean never got up to breakfast; but the lion's share of ash pone and buttermilk was put aside for his forenoon meal at ten o'clock.

"I wish father would git up this morning," said Lottie, as she stood by the table eating ash pone; "I want to ask him if I'd better go. I reckon, though, I know what he'll say."

"He'll say 'Jist as your mam says about that,'" said Tomtit, with his mouth full.

"Mother is the team in this house," said John; "an' a big load she has to draw."

"An' she is ready an' willing to do it," added Lottie.

"Yis," said Tomtit; "but what riles me is, t'other ox is plaguy willin' she should. It's awful hard when one ox goes ahead and t'other holds back — stands to reason 'tis."

"Oh, you shet up with your talk," said the mother.

Now it happened that Mr. Dean, being more than half-awake for a wonder, heard what was said, and it had the effect of setting him to thinking, and shortly he got up, rubbed open his eyes, and commenced the business of the day.

"Lottie," said he, "what did you want to ask me about?"

"Why, dad, you know our Sam is lost. I want to ask you if I can't go and hunt him up?"

"You do!" said Mr. Dean, in great surprise. "Wall, I must say that beats all! What does your mam say to it?"

"Wall," replied Mrs. Dean, "since the child has her mind sot on gwine, she mought as well go, an' be done with it; though I'm sure we can't none of us tell what'll happen to her if she leaves this are shelter of her hum. But the Lord, he ken take care of her, ur I never should durst saund her one step."

"Wall, wall, Lottie," said the father, sitting down on a three-legged stool and sipping buttermilk, "your mother is a stornary woman, depend upon it. You jist foller her device, an' you'll do about right. I don't know what's best myself; but if you *will* go, I'll go with you a piece."

"So will I," said the mother, the tears starting.

"So will I!" echoed all the children.

As this was a time of great moment, Mrs. Dean could not let Lottie go until she had prayed with her, which she did in the presence of the family.

"O Lord, keep her safely, an' return her to us. Deliver her from evil!" these were some of her petitions.

Little time was spent in discussing the question of dress, for small choice could be had where one had but a single suit. The mother, however, was bent on giving her a decent fit-out.

"It will make sich a difference with the way folks'll treat you. I don't want people should think you are of the lowest of the 'Piny Woods' people, but from one of the fust families."

"Oh, mother, what do I care?" interrupted Lottie. "I'm gwine arter Sam."

"Yis, an' while you are lookin' him up,

other eyes will be on you, an' you must make folks respect you, ur else they 'wont treat you well."

"Will it do any hurt for me to go bare-foot?"

"I can't tell jistly how folks on the road would look at it," said the mother.

"But I haint got nary shoes," said Lottie, sadly.

"I know it," replied her mother; "an' when you come to a courthouse village, ur a town, you must have a pair to clap on."

"But how is I to git 'em?"

"I am gwine to let you have my cowhide shoes," replied Mrs. Dean.

"Now, mam, don't go to lettin' Lot have your best cowhides, good as bran-new," pleaded Tomtit, for the sake of a scene.

"Let mam do as she's a mind to," said John.

"I ken mend your dress, while you put up a snack of ash pone," said Mrs. Dean; "so be spry, an' git off."

"What shall I do for a bonnit, mam?" asked Lottie.

"I shall let you wear my nice shaker-bonnit, jist this time; but you'll be careful of it, I know, an' bring it back safe;" and the mother smiled as she said it, keeping her needle flying the while. The shaker was purchased, years before, of a slave woman on a neighboring plantation, and had been kept hung up in the corner of the cabin. This mother, like others, took delight in bestowing her own things on her daughter.

"There, mother, how do I do?" asked Lottie, looking into her mother's eyes for lack of a mirror.

"Look, honey?" returned the fond mother, "I never seed you look better in my life. You looks neat as a daisy, if it is your own mother that says it."

"Mam's crows are jist the whitest," said Tomtit, in his own droll way.

"Good-by to you," said Lottie, starting out of the door; "I'm gwine."

"So soon!" said Tomtit; "I aint half ready to have you go."

"See here, Lottie," said the mother, with tears in her eyes; "we must take the goat to pastur', an' we may as well go with you a piece. Tomtit, untie Sam's goat an' lead it along;" and the mother started out to give Lottie her last instructions. The father had by this time finished his ash pone and butter-milk, and hastened after them, while the children and the goat brought up the rear.

The parting came at length, and poor Lottie went on her way alone, with fewer tears than her mother shed, who sent her forth with her prayers and blessing.

"I don't understand," said Mr. Dean to his wife, "why it wouldn't have done jist as well to saunt one of the boys, John or Tomtit, instead of Lottie." It was his way to make objections when it was too late; his wit "like the Dutchman's," came afterwards.

"Them are boys is boys," replied the wife; "they haint got no judgment. But Lottie,

she's a very prudint gal; she'll do jist as well as I could myself;" and the father had no more to say.

Leaving the Deans returning to their cabin, and Lottie hastening after Sam, barefoot and alone, with a bundle containing the much-prized cowhide shoes, and a snack of ash pone, let us look after Sam, for it will take the sister's nimble pace some time to overtake him.

V.

THE KIDNAPPER IN HIS HIDING-PLACE.

HAVING reached Turner's Cross Roads, Workfork turned and took a north-eastern route toward the Dismal Swamp, in the outskirts of which was his slave rendezvous. This change of direction was made partly to avoid pursuit. Urging on his horses until ten o'clock, he came to a tavern, — a low drinking hole — where he stopped and got refreshments for himself and horses, not allowing those in the carry-all to get out, lest they should betray him. He also got a supply of corn bread and bacon for the use of his stolen goods. Starting the next morning before light, he made a distance of sixty miles that day, resting his horses in the shade at noon, and suffering the slaves to get out of the carry-all, one by one, and stretch their

limbs. So fearful was he of pursuit, however, that he soon started and made all the haste possible. The evening twilight of the third day was coming on, when they approached the swamp region. The soil was rich, being miry bogs of decayed vegetation. Here and there a cornfield had been lately reclaimed from the wilderness of swamp land by draining, and the lofty stalks of the grain stood thick and dense like serried ranks of trees. The beautiful tasselled army held firm footing in the rich loam and muck of which the soil was composed. Huge rows of upturned stumps, bristling with pronged roots, enclosed the road which passed across the verge of the swamp for miles, being mostly built on logs and rails. The jaded horses, as they entered the wood, were in no mood to be met by hosts of hungry dragon-flies, which started up from their green beds, thirsting for a drink of blood. At the same instant, large, ravenous mosquitoes, which had been lying in wait all day, made a rush, and attacked the inmates

of the carry-all. Rafe and Sam had as much as they could do to defend themselves. The hungry insects singled out Hal and Frank as special favorites, and Chainy was fully occupied in brushing them off. Hal disdained to cry when bitten; but baby Frank hid his head in Chainy's bosom and sobbed out his grief. Poor little fellow! homesick and tired out with his long journey, he knew not what to make of his new troubles.

Chainy's heart yearned over him, longing to return him to his home. She dearly loved both the children, but felt her pity stirred most for the younger.

"Nuffin' but an infant baby," said she to herself; "poor little ting!" and she bore him clasped in her arms all that long, long ride. How many times he sobbed himself to sleep with his arms twining her neck! The fierce Workfork had so frightened him that he had learned not to cry aloud, and it was with smothered sobs that he told his heart-breaking troubles to faithful Chainy. She,

good, kind, and patient as the summer's day, kissed him, smoothed his pretty curly head, looked lovingly into his tearful eyes, and clasping him to her bosom, again and again soothed him to sleep. Already she was his foster-mother, and in her heart, so long bereft of her own children, there sprang up tendrils of affection, firm and strong as in her youth, and fastened on the dear little child. Oh, wonderful love, that heals both giver and receiver, dark, indeed were this earth without thy life-giving presence !

Hal, a spoilt child, was never half as interesting as now. The long ride had made him fully acquainted with Chainy, and whenever Workfork could not hear him, he would pour out his full heart, making her his confidant.

"Dat bad man," whispered he, "God don't love him ; he done dressed me up in dese sher old duds. I aint gwine to wear 'em, I aint. I'll tear 'em off and run away, I will. I'll tell you what I'se gwine to do, Aunt Chainy ; I'se 'most a man, you know, an' when I gits to be

a sure-nuff man, I'se gwine to take you an Frank an' run off! Will I be black man when I grows up, Aunt Chainy?"

"No, dat you wont, honey," whispered she; "you'll be des as white as de lily."

"You'll wash all dis sher black off when we gets clar; wont you, aunty?" said the child.

"Dat I will, rapid," was the kind response.

As the darkness drew on, Sam, who had overheard this conversation, noticed that Hal nestled closer to Chainy. He had taken a great fancy to him, he was so like his own little brother Tomtit, and he felt glad to see her brush off the mosquitoes, and give him a mother's care. As for himself, he cared little for mosquitoes or present discomfort; the great thought with him was, Where will the man carry us? He was mostly troubled with the thought that some dreadful fate awaited them.

At last, Workfork stopped his horses in the gloomy shade of a monarch cypress, under

which logs of fallen timber were scattered, and promised a footing from the oozy soil. On a sandy knoll, some twenty rods distant, was a deserted negro cabin, quite hidden from the road by a tangled luxuriance of bamboo, briars, and brushwood. In days gone by, before the step of civilization had so far invaded the wild, this had been the abode of fugitives from unpaid labor; now they penetrated deeper into the almost inaccessible wilderness. After incredible labor, the party reached the cabin.

"Wall," said Workfork aloud to himself, for he could not be supposed to consult with Chainy, "this are cabin'll do to stable the hosses, an' I can hide the carriage in the bushes. I must push in further with my gang, though, fur the fire to keep off the 'skeeturs'll betray me if I'm so near the highway."

He then ordered Sam and Rafe to help him get the horses and carriage to the hut. This was no easy matter, but not as impracticable

as appeared, as, in preparing the land for corn, not far distant, deep ruts had somewhat drained the swamp between the road and the cabin ; besides, a sand ridge lay in that direction. It was necessary to cut down or bend the undergrowth to make a passage. Leaving Chainy with the little boys in the cabin, Workfork and the two lads, Sam and Rafe, fell to work, clearing a road for the vehicle.

The cabin was a dreary, dilapidated place, with no fire, food, or comforts ; but it was a shelter, and as Chainy sat down in one corner still holding baby Frank, and Hal nestling close beside her, she was thankful for even this. As soon as the slave-driver was out of hearing, Hal asked her if it wouldn't be a good plan for him to run away. "I'se most a man now, Aunt Chainy, an' I'll take you an' Frank with me."

Chainy told him that they had had no supper, and the night was so dark that they would get mired in the swamp.

"No, no, honey; 'taint time yit;" and he felt her loving hand twining his flaxen curls; but he looked in vain to see her kind old face.

"It's mighty dark, Aunt Chainy; aint it?" murmured he, pressing closer to her side, and resting his head on her arm.

"Dat 'tis, honey; but don't you be afeerd; de Fader, he'll take care on us."

"Can God see us now?" asked Hal.

"Yis, honey; he see us all de time. 'Pears like it never dark to him," said Chainy.

"Does God want to have us slaves?" asked the boy.

"No, darlin', dat he don't," replied Chainy. "He dat good and kind — why, he's de Fader in heaven!"

"I wish he'd make us free, den," said Hal.

"Wall," replied Chainy, "we'll keep prayin' and prayin', an' I reckon he'll hear us, an' help us git free. I can't bar to think such an infant baby as you an' little Frank 'is should be slaves. It'll kill you, poor little tings! An' how your poor fader an' moder'll

mourn for ye ! It's like I can't help thinkin' on 'em, when I 'members how my heart done brok't in half when my poor Trolo was lost, an' perished !" and the slave-woman's voice failed her, as the fountain of her grief burst forth afresh, and she wept as she had not for years. Heart-rending it was to Hal for her to cry so, and he hung on her neck and cried too, and begged her to stop.

"He was 'most a man, and he'd be her boy, and take care of her, and nobody shouldn't hurt her, that they shouldn't !"

But the burst of grief for her long-lost child was a relief to the desolate mother. So many long, long years had passed when she could not weep, a burning anguish drying up the fountain of her tears, and it was only the love and care of these children that had given her the blessed relief of weeping at the remembrance of her own cruel wrongs.

Hal soon fell asleep, and Chainy was lifting her heart in silent prayer to the great Source of all comfort and consolation, when she was

interrupted by the startling tones of Workfork.

"Holloa, Chainy! Why don't you light a fire?" with an oath. He knew very well that she had no means of doing it; but he was in the mood for finding fault about something. "Come, Sam, come, Rafe, you lazy niggers, stir yourselves, and let's have a light!" He then looked round for a pine-knot and struck a light, and leading the horses to the cabin, with the aid of the lads, drew the carriage into the bushes, and covered it with green boughs. It was getting late in the evening when this was done, and all were as yet supperless. Workfork had taken a dram of brandy from a bottle he carried in his pocket, and worked and scolded hard on the stimulant. Having baited his horses from a bag of oats in the carriage, and taking a hurried "snack" or luncheon from the box, he started off with his "effects" for a more secure hiding-place. He was disappointed in not meeting his partner, Mr. Sniper, at the cabin, and as he picked

his way with his forlorn company, he diversified his talk with frequent oaths, because he had failed to appear.

They advanced slowly ; for what with the darkness, only rendered visible by the pine-knot, and the innumerable fire-flies,— what with the black mud-holes, spongy bogs hidden by mats of tangled reeds, ferns, and briers, and what with thorny thickets, it was a marvel that they made any progress.

Some one of them was floundering in the plashes every few moments. At length they reached the sandy ridge that ran through this part of the swamp, and stopped to breathe and shake off some of the mud and water, for they were mostly besmeared.

Workfork swore at "the swamp and its fixings" in his fiercest manner. Chainy who, from sitting on the cold ground, and from her long exposure, suffered much from rheumatism, wearied and faint, sank to the ground, unable to carry Frank any further.

"Halloa !" shouted Workfork, "up with

you! Come, if you make a fuss toting that are light thing, I'll let you try Hal's heft. D'ye hear? Up with ye!" and he gave her a brutal kick. Chainy groaned, but did not attempt to rise.

"Look here, old woman," said the driver, "you takes a mighty likin' to that are young un; now, if you makes any bones 'bout totin' him, I'll stick his head in the fust puddle. He aint much 'count, noway, an' I wouldn't mind sinkin' a hundred dollars in the mud when it was in the shape of a squallin' young un! So you better be movin', if you want to save him from a mire-hole to-night. I'll throw him in, I declar, if you don't git up!" and the inhuman wretch stepped forward and caught Frank from Chainy's arms. She roused herself by an almost superhuman effort, and slowly getting up, exclaimed, —

"Oh, don't kill him — don't, massa! I'll do all I ken, but I'se dat worn out."

"Worn out! I knows that," replied the hardened man; "I bought you for worn-

out," — he kidnapped her. "All pertence though. I've found out you've some strength left, an' I mean to use it. Here, take the child, an' let me see no more of your performances. I'll stick the child in a mud-hole, if you do. An' when you do give out for good, I'm gwine to leave you to die in the blackest water I can find in the swamp. If Sam and Rafe don't behave, I'll put them in too."

The lads quaked with fear at the threats of the iron-hearted man, and were ready to crouch like whipped dogs to do his bidding.

"'Long with ye!" shouted the master; "be movin', every hoof on ye!" and shortly they reached a snug little cabin, hidden in pines and junipers, built long before by voluntary exiles from slavery, and forsaken for a more distant retreat.

Dried leaves on the cabin floor, served the company for beds; but wet and weary, they were glad of even these, and of a shelter from the chilly night air.

Fresh swarms of bloodthirsty mosquitoes

continued to attack them, and sleep was out of the question. Accordingly, Sam and Rafe, obeying orders, soon had a fire blazing in front of the bushes which hid the entrance of the cabin, and piling on dry pine boughs, which lay thickly scattered around, they had leave to lie down and rest, but were forbidden to sleep, or let the fire go down, under penalty of dreadful punishment.

Workfork took to his brandy-bottle till dead drunk. Chainy, who had been sitting by the fire drying her own and the children's clothes, hearing his heavy breathing, went in, and curled down on the leaves, in a corner of the hut, with Frank and Hal beside her. While the children slept, she was wakeful and anxious. She feared her strength would fail her, and his horrid threat be executed. What could she do to save the darling children?

She feared, too, in her motherly care for Sam and Rafe, that they would sleep, and often the faithful woman rose to replenish the fire, the lads being unable to keep awake.

Hour after hour, the busy brain of the slave-woman was hard at work. She fancied the children were feverish, and that they would be sick. At last her determination was taken. She would make the attempt to do something for them. It was already near midnight, and praying God to help her, she arose to execute her plan.

She had heard that a part of this extensive region was a safe retreat for those escaping from servitude; she could but die, at the worst, and why should she not try to escape? .

VI.

THE MAN WITH THE GUN. THE ESCAPE.

NO slave on the plantation to which Chainy belonged was more comely than she in her younger years. Her cheerful, hopeful temperament brightened the burdens of her slave lot, but maturer life brought increasing sorrow. Her husband, after being beaten almost to death by the overseer, fled to the Great Swamp, whither, to escape from the brutality of the same task-master, she attempted to follow with her boy Trolo. She was recaptured and put to torture, and from that hour, when she heard that Trolo was shot, hope died out in her heart, and she sank down to a premature and sorrow-crushed old age. Smiles seldom ever lighted up her wrinkled visage, no expectation of coming good in this world gilded the sombre clouds

that shadowed her pathway. She had toiled on through long years, bearing every indignity, hopeless and aimless, never getting courage to make a second attempt at freeing herself from the heavy yoke. But now, within a few hours, she, so old and feeble, with no kin to live for, had had the depths of her nature stirred, by seeing those helpless children threatened with slavery and death ; she — dear, disinterested heart ! — would save them if it cost her her life.

How she feared, if she tried to get them free, that Workfork would pursue and retake them. Oh ! he seemed the great and only obstacle in the way of success. It was not the quagmires and sloughs that she dreaded — not the limber snakes and slimy things, nor the shaggy wild beasts of the woods ; it was a fellow-being ! As she stood over him gazing at his flushed features, by the fire-light flickering through the evergreens, the horrid temptation entered her heart to strangle him !

There was a strong cord dangling from his pocket, and as she drew it out, his knife and tinder-box came with it. To strangle him would be but the work of a moment, and then four lives would be saved, — four lives worth far more than his, for he only lived to do evil. Would it not be doing a good deed to kill such a monster? What had she not suffered from his cruelty, and what might she not still suffer ere death came to her relief?

Chainy's heart was hardening to stone. She would kill the fiend in human shape ; and stooping down, began to fit the slip-noose she had made in the cord around his neck. He was still in deep and heavy slumber. She began to draw the cord ; in a moment more he would be in eternity. A sudden thought stopped her ; her hand fell powerless by her side. "Once this bad man had *a mother*, and she loved him as I loved my boy. Chainy can't kill him, for his mother loved him !" and the kind-hearted woman shed tears.

"Poor soul ! he aint ready to die yet," she



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said to herself; "how can I kill him when he'd go straight to torment? No, no, Chainy can't do dat! While dere's life, dere's hope, an' p'r'aps his mother prayed for him, an' he may repent an' be an angel in heaven! Reckon he will. O Fader, make him sorry for his sins! May de Lord forgive him!

"I can't take de vengeance in my hands; I can't stain my soul with blood; I'll trust de Fader, dat I will!" As she arose from her knees, she took the cord, knife, and tinder-box and put them in her pocket. But as she went out the door, to arouse Sam and Rafe, she was startled by seeing a man with a gun beside the cabin.

"I'll not harm ye!" said he, in a low voice, evidently having been a witness of her temptation. "I'm a soldier, jist left Jeff's army. They forced me to 'list. Ye see they wants us to kill the Yankees, by hook or by crook, an' keep 'em from takin' Norfolk, an' I don't jistly know what to believe, whar so much is gwine. I'se bound to jine the party that beats

when the war is over, an' I reckons it'll be the Yankees. An' I has a little business that takes me across the swamp. So you see, aunty, I'm bound to help you on a piece, if I bees in such a ravin' hurry;" for he seemed instinctively to understand her plans of escape.

"De Lord saunt you!" said Chainy, won by his frank manner. "Is you a secesh soldier?"

"I don't know much about it, aunty," replied the soldier; "but as near as I ken make out, I'm a Union man what wont fight fur slavery. Ye see, aunty, you slaves an' we poor whites is in awful straits; it's tough to tell which is wussest off. We've been down so long, a change can't make us wuss off; it's my mind, when the Yankees straightens things, we shall take our turn, an' be top buckets of the wheel, for ev'ry dog has his day, an' we haint had ourn."

"Why hi!" whispered Chainy, stepping farther from the cabin, "dish sher aint de

Yankees' war, nor de secesh war; dis is de Lord's war."

"I reckon you're right," said the soldier; "but what's de use of fightin' in de dark? I mought kill my friend when I didn't mean to. But if you is in trouble, Will Forbes will help you all he can."

Chainy was grateful to find a friend when she so much needed one; and drawing him beside the fire, briefly told him of the events of the past few days and of her desire to escape with the little ones. The deserter entered fully into her plans, offering to carry one of the children, and to aid all he could, as long as their route lay in the same direction.

It was no small matter to get Sam and Rafe fully awake; but when they comprehended her purpose, and who was to go with them, all at once their faculties brightened up, and they were ready to go.

"I'se in for anything 'cept to be a slave!" said Sam. "Come, let's be gwine!"

"Yes, indeed, an' double indeed!" said Rafe, "let's be gwine! I'se all ready!" and he danced up and down in great glee.

"Oh, hush, darlin'!" said Chainy, putting her hand on his shoulder; "you'll wake massa an' den dere'll be no gittin' clar!" Rafe was still as a mouse at this thought.

"Now we must take de chil'en in de cabin," said Chainy; "dere's no gwine widout 'em. The stranger, he'll tote Hal, if Sam an' Rafe will take turns with me in totin' the infant baby." Saying this, she noiselessly entered the hut, and wrapping the babe in her linsey-woolsey apron, gave him to Rafe, and in a moment more appeared with Hal, whom she put in the soldier's arms, and the party set out, but as suddenly made a halt.

"Has the old man there got a gun?" asked the stranger.

"Yes, dat he has!" replied Chainy; and Sam, taking the hint, ran back and got it.

Chainy's heart was filled with thankfulness, for the deliverance from her dreadful tempta-

tion, and for the timely aid of the stranger, which she felt was kindly ordered of God. Inspired with courage, her step was almost as elastic as in days gone by. She insisted on "toting" Frank, she felt so much better, she said. But the lads obstinately refused, and tripped along beside her, carrying him by turns. They were in high spirits,—a little excited with fear, but more with the hope of escape.

"I reckons we'll git clar dish time!" said Chainy, as she hurried through the short grass of the ridge, now damp with dew.

"I reckon so," said the soldier; "if the trader comes after us, I've a spare bullet for him. He's welcome to it, if he'll take the trouble to follow up and git it."

"Oh, I do pray de Fader dat dere mayn't be no blood shed," said Chainy. The little ones still slept; she thought them less feverish than when in the cabin.

"I reckon de air on dish sher juniper ridge'll do 'em heaps of good," said she;

"pears like it's dat wholesome! de birds sleeps out in de night air, an' dey's nebber sick!"

Just then a whippoorwill poured forth his shrill song, and Sam said, —

"This are swamp is all alive; aint it, Aunt Chainy!"

"Dat 'tis, honey!" she replied; "lots o' things gits a livin' here. Jest you hear de frogs sing, how loud! Dey has deir little houses down in de mud-puddles, — sleeps all de day, an' sings all de night. Dere's many slaves would be glad to change places wid 'em, an' lib in de swamp, like dey do!"

"I'd be a frog lots sooner than I'd be a slave! and the fust water I comes to, I'll wash this black off!" said Sam, spiritedly.

"That's natur'; but white slaves is common," said the soldier.

Sam made no reply, but, grasping a handful of wet grass, began to rub his face.

The moon was now up, and they found quite a good path, although at times ob-

structed by briers and thorny bushes, which scratched their skin, and tore their clothes unmercifully. Yet it was wonderful what progress they made under that great stimulus, the love of liberty.

VII.

CAUGHT BY THE HORNS.

WHEN the morning broke, they were far away from the hut, and the soldier told Chainy he thought they might venture to stop and rest. As he put down Hal, he said he was as heavy as a bag of sand. Chainy had also taken her turn in "toting," and wearied with Frank, felt less courage than when they started.

"Do you think de slave-driver will be after us?" she asked of the soldier.

"I reckon not," replied Forbes; "he's in a drunk sleep, ye see, an' that are cypress over the cabin make a powerful shade; he wont naturally find out it's mornin' till noon."

"But what shall we have for breakfast?" at length asked Chainy, and she leaned her head against the thick bushes which formed

the back to her mossy seat, and pondered the matter in deep perplexity. The lads, Sam and Rafe, were thinking of the same matter too; but the soldier, faint and tired, had lain down on the grass a little distance off, and was fast asleep.

"Aunt Chainy, what's we gwine to have for breakfast?" tremulously asked Sam, just then thinking how good the ash pones and buttermilk at the Piny-Wood cottage tasted; and in his home vision seeing his dear, kind father smoking in the chimney-corner, his mother chatting glibly, and the group of brothers and sisters around the table, — the breakfast so good, and they all so hungry!

"Oh, dear, Aunt Chainy," he cried, "I wish I was back to hum this minute!"

"Dere, dere, don't cry, honey," replied Chainy, smoothing his bushy head; "I wish you was dere too, but never mind, never mind. Pray to God when you is in strouble; he'll make you feel happy. You is hungry, honey; Aunt Chainy'll see what she ken do to

git you suffin' to eat. She didn't tote you off in dish sher woody place to have you starve, dat she didn't!" and, getting up, she began to look around for something to satisfy their hunger.

"I makes sure we ken find some berries, or roots, or wild pertaters, or suffin'," she said, putting the best heart on matters.

"Don't breathe!" whispered Sam; "there's a rabbit down that path! I'll have him for breakfast!" and away went Sam after the rabbit, which was bounding off at its accustomed speed when the boy whistled; at once the animal stopped and looked around, and at the instant, the sharp pebble which Sam had picked up struck it in the head with such force as to stun it, and the captor bore it in triumph to Aunt Chainy.

"Why, hi!" exclaimed she, "you is de 'markablest boy ever I see! You did that mos' amiable!"

But as she was preparing to dress it, she bethought herself that she could not cook it

for want of fire, when putting her hand into her pocket, she found Workfork's tinder-box and knife, which she now recollected she had taken, thinking she might need them.

"How fortunate!" she exclaimed. "Now you'll make de fire, an' I'll cook de breakfast."

Sam and Rafe gathered dry boughs, and striking the flint till sparks kindled the tinder, soon a good fire was merrily crackling.

At Chainy's suggestion, while she was busy getting the rabbit ready, the boys drove two forked sticks into the ground, a foot apart, near the fire. A stout stick was laid horizontally across these, on which the game was hung when dressed. While it was cooking, Chainy made her table ready, stopping every now and then to turn the game, and in due time, it was well roasted for the morning meal.

The stranger being called, Chainy and her family sat down to breakfast, in an enclosure of bushes near by. With the soft, clean grass

for table-cloth, large leaves for plates and platter, with berries and roasted roots for relish, and with hunger for "the seasoning," the food was delicious and called forth grateful thanks.

"Why, hi!" exclaimed Will Forbes; "how did this are come? Did it rain down?"

Chainy then told him of Sam's feat in killing the rabbit, which he heard with admiration.

"You'd make a good shot," said he; "why didn't you call me and let me shoot him?"

"The rabbit wouldn't wait," said Sam, dryly. "Oh, isn't this breakfast the best I ever eat!" continued he, eating as fast as a hungry boy could.

"You is right smart of a hunter, you is," said Chainy.

"That's so," said the soldier, helping himself to a leg of rabbit.

Breakfast over, the next thing was to look out for a place of safety for the day. It was decided that they should continue on the

ridge as long as they could, as Will Forbes would thus be with and protect them. He would continue with them until the ridge met the canal, when he must leave, for he was on a secret errand that demanded speed.

The sun was rising and the fog too, their path lying through dense clouds of vapor, exhaled from the vast swamp pools around them. Chainy alternated between hope and fear; she hoped the fog would pass off and the day prove clear, but feared it might "shut in" and rain hard; and what could she do in the dripping swamp, with no shelter for the children? Then all she had ever heard of bears and panthers increased her apprehension, and she felt that no time should be lost in seeking a home.

But how could they defend themselves from the wild beasts that infested the wilderness, even if they had a dwelling? She knew not; but she did not dread the wild-cat and the panther so much as she did her fellow-man who had enslaved her.

She had learned, years ago, that there was a settlement of her people in some part of this waste, but feared she could not reach them, such were the difficulties of the way. The ridge could not much longer be relied on, as they could be easily traced and followed, and soon they must strike out into the bogs and mire for safety. Still they plodded on, Chainy, Sam, and Rafe carrying little Frank, and the soldier lugging Hal on his back. By and by, they came to the canal, and their soldier-friend reluctantly bade them good-by.

The little company looked after him with eager eyes, as, after unmooring a boat, he rowed down the canal.

"Why couldn't good man stay with us, or take us with him in his boat?" asked Sam.

"I reckon he's on 'portant business in de war," replied Chainy; "an' he can't spend no more time hinderin' with us. I 'spect he am a spy for de Yankees."

When he was fairly out of sight, the pil-

grims turned upon a branch of the sand-bar, to seek a dwelling-place on some declivity of the ridge. Chainy was so tortured with rheumatism that she was obliged to rest by leaning against a tree, for so dripping were the bushes and grass with dew that sitting down was out of the question.

"Poor little Hal!" exclaimed the kind woman, as she saw his bleeding feet,—he had lost his shoes in the mud the night before,— "it'll never do to have you spile your feet in this way. We must make a cheer for you to ride in. Oh, if my ole eyes could jest light on some willer, now, I'd weave you a nice little carriage, right smart rapid ; dat I would."

"I'll find some willer, den," said Rafe, "I'se made baskets over an' offen," and he disappeared in the underwood that walled the slope.

"Don't go but a little piece," said Chainy, anxiously : "you'll git lost, an' dat will be strouble indeed."

"I'll break de bushes as I goes," called out Rafe ; "den I find de way back."

In a short time, he returned with his arms full of osiers, and the sun having cleared away the fog, they seated themselves on a log, and in the course of a few hours they had woven a chair, both light and strong. This they slung on two bamboos cut for the purpose, and Hal, with Sam and Rafe for bearers, looked quite comfortable, Chainy having bound up his feet in the healing leaves of the dock-mackie.

But their way became more difficult. Hedges of thorny shrubbery had to be penetrated, which tore their tattered garments, and scratched their hands and feet intolerably. Brilliant-winged birds, strangely tame; and rarely disturbed by human beings, filled the air with blithest melody.

"Dish sher is some 'leviation of our stroubles," said Chainy; "dese sher birds singin' so chirk, it helps us hope for de best. 'Pears like dish sher woodsy place is their free country. An' I pray de Fader it may be our free country."

In this happy mood they encamped for the night, lying down under the bushes. The next morning, after a "snack" of roots and berries, they started on their journey. Chainy was wondering what they should have to eat for the day, and lifting her heart to God for help, when all at once, coming to an open space, they beheld deer quietly grazing. The animals raised their heads in surprise, and started off like wild sheep; they were not much frightened, however, and occasionally turned to wonder at the intruders. Sam proposed to Rafe that they put down Hal, run after the deer, and try to catch one.

"If you must rest your limbs, have a run, den," said Chainy, as they started off in pursuit.

They soon found, however, the deer made light work of keeping out of their way, and they were about giving up the chase as useless, when an antlered deer was caught in a shrubby, gnarled oak, and in his haste to get away, made sad work of extricating himself.

He kicked and plunged and shook his horns, only to get the more entangled. The firm old tree held him fast in its strong arms.

"Now we got him!" shouted Rafe; "he's cotched dish time, dat is evident. Run, Sam, to Aunt Chainy, an' tote de knife an' de cord; 'parently, we 'spatch him rapid!"

Sam quickly returned with the cord and knife, and Aunt Chainy presently appeared, bringing Frank, and Hal's chair, while the little fellow tried his feet again. Seating herself and the children on a fallen pine-tree, she looked admiringly at the operations of Sam and Rafe. The former having managed to climb the tree by cutting away some of the tough, thicket-like branches, and getting directly above the deer, succeeded in putting the cord over his neck, by lowering one end of it until it reached the ground. Rafe pulled this end to himself, by means of a long stick, forked at the end; he then reached it up to Sam on one of its extremities. Sam lost no time in securing the noose; and bracing him-

self against a bough, and drawing the cord with main strength, shortly the deer was strangled, despite renewed attempts at kicking and plunging.

"There! what you think of that?" asked Sam, addressing Chainy.

"Fader's life!" exclaimed she; "dat was done mos' amiable. Now, honey, make has' down, an' stick him in de throat, to let de blood off;" and down came Sam and did as she bade him.

"Now," said Chainy, wiping tears from her eyes, "'pears like dis sher is most providency, sartin; dish make me tink we must go right to housekeepin' to onct. Dis sher deer'll make a heap of store of most amiable ven'son, an' I'se afeered we'll waste it."

They now proceeded to dress the animal, and roast all they could of it. The tongue, a delicious morsel, with a round, made their dinner.

What should they do with the meat? A

part of it Chainy had cut into thin strips and dried by the fire.

They had chosen their stopping-place near a spring, which gurgled up, cool and limpid.

"If we on'y had a spring-house like massa's," said Chainy; "we could keep de rest of de ven'son right smart long time."

"How did you keep meat there?" asked Sam.

"Oh," replied Chainy, "we sewed cloth round it to keep it clean; den, we dug a hole in de sand where de water run, an' covered it up. De sand was dat cool, it keep de meat sweet right smart time."

Sam and Rafe looked at each other, and taking the hint, went to the spring and commenced digging a deep trough in the sand, and before night, they had the choicest part of the deer buried almost as safely as if in ice.

VIII.

A CONSULTATION.

WORKFORK slept long and well the morning of the escape of the fugitives. It was nearly noon when he was awakened by the entrance of some one. But his eyes were so weak that he could not get them open at once, and his bones so stiff that the cramp caught him the moment he tried to turn over.

"Halloa, there, Chainy! what you wake me up for, with your confounded noise, afore I'm half done my nap? Haint slept hardly a wink to-night, you've kept up sich a hateful uproar scraping that kittle. You shall smart for't, old gal, see if you don't!" and he continued to busy himself rubbing open his eyes.

"Halloa, old chap!" called out the new-comer, with a burst of laughter. "It's only

me; an' I don't see no Chainy,—she's ske-daddled, apparently."

"Sniper, is that you?" asked Workfork, who, having solved the two problems of getting his eyes open and turning over, began to come to himself a little.

"Reckon 'taint nobody else," replied Sniper.

"Why didn't you come here yesterday accordin' to 'pintment?" asked Workfork, with an oath.

"'Cause why, ye see I had very important engagement." The truth was, being a poor white, his old propensity of whiskey-drinking overcame him, and he lay drunk for hours at a low tavern, some two miles from the swamp. "Let me tell you, old chap, I've got lots of news for yer. Our trade is up, so fur as sellin' slaves is consarned."

"Don't bleeve a word you say," replied Workfork, rising on one elbow. "Where's that jade, Chainy, that she don't tote in breakfast?"

"I haint seen hide nor hair on her," said

Sniper; "but that's nuther here nor there; our trade is up if she war here."

"Do you mean we couldn't sell her?" asked Workfork.

"Yes," replied Sniper, taking a huge pinch of snuff from his vest pocket; "I mean to say that this are war has smashed our profits. Blast it! What's the use of its comin' in our day? You know, Workfork, there never was sich a profitable business as we slave-buyers has driv; it's too bad to have this are war come an' spile it all."

"What do you mean, Sniper? Out with it."

"Why, slaves is dog-cheap," replied the other; "an' at this rate, we can't give 'em away in a little while; we shall have to hire folks to take 'em off our hands, and be glad to git shed of 'em at that. It'll cost more than they're wuth, to fodder 'em. There's a story that old Abe is gwine to bring us to terms by 'mancipatin' all the slaves!"

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Workfork, starting

up; "I don't bleeve a word on't. Likely story! It can't be done, nohow. Linkin's nothin' to do with us; we've set up for ourselves, an' our armies is tow subdue the North, call the roll in a month under Bunker Hill Monymint, an' settle slavery in them are regions fur good; that's what our armies is gwine to do. Slaves cheap! Why, man, they'll be up higher than ever they was. They may go down a leetle for a while, I'll allow; but the rise is sure to foller, — just as sure as we *subdue* the North. Don't you see; — the bigger the territory to be s'plied, the bigger the demand, an' the higher the price? Why, man, sich old trash as this are Chainy here — why the deuce don't she tote in the breakfast? — sich trash'll sell fur risin' of two thousand dollars a head! Don't ye see?"

"I see — if we conquers the North," replied Sniper; "but that's the 'if' that's right in the way. We don't git ahead none; the Yankees is cornerin' us every which way; an' the more soldiers we kills off, the more they saunds

down; we're just about overrun with 'em. There's the great army of the Potomac, pourin' down upon us."

"What of that?" replied Workfork; "they do say half of them ginerals an' soldiers is with us, an' they'll only pertend to fight us like; they'll never do us any harm. They do say that they'll betray the North into our hands. All is, if the trade in slaves is down, we ken quit it fur a time, an' do somethin' else that pays better."

"What under the canopy can we do, old chap? I make sure there aint nothin' we ken do; this are business has spilt us fur everythin' else."

"Not by a big sight," replied Workfork, rising and striding across the cabin as well as his stiff limbs would permit. "We're just the chaps Jeff's government wants; we ken go to recruitin' poor whites,—git 'em into the army,—an' you an' I'll stand a chance to be officers. We sha'n't be nothin' but officers from the fust. I sha'n't start nothin' lower

than a colonel, an' you'd make a good cap'n, I reckon, arter you'd drilled under me awhile."

"Well," replied Sniper, "that sounds as if it might be so; we mought try it; at least — no harm in that."

"But I must dispose of these are slaves I has on hand," added Workfork; "it wont do to waste all this are property, if its vally is low."

"But where is they?" asked Sniper. "I haint seed none of 'em. How many did you ketch?"

"Five, all told," replied Workfork. "I ketched five. I call that doin' business fur a short trip. How many did you?"

"Why, ye see," replied Sniper, "bein' as stock was so low, I didn't think 'em wuth the ketchin', an' so I come on to persuade you to give up this are kind of speculatin', an' turn your hand to suthin' that would pay better."

"That's curis, anyhow," replied Workfork..
"We've slumped through, all round; an' if

them are servants don't show 'emselfes putty quick, I shall begin to think they're 'mong the missing. Shouldn't wonder if somebody stole 'em while I was asleep; they wouldn't have gumption enough to think of runnin' away, on their own account, — that they wouldn't!"

"Don't know about that," said Sniper; "they crawl off when you wouldn't 'spect it. If on'y we had a good hound, we'd fix 'em right smart quick."

"That's so," replied Workfork; "but it don't do for you an' me to s'port dogs till we settles down; it costs lots to keep 'em, an' then they're allus betrayin' us when we can't help it."

"What can we do? We must do suthin'," said Sniper; "it wont do to rest on our oars in this way."

"Reckon it wont," returned Workfork. "Wal, I'll tell you what; we must foller up them are sarvents, an' ketch 'em, sell 'em off for what they'll fetch, an' drum up a regi-

ment. If there's danger that our government can't put down the Yankees, we'll pull up stakes an' help 'em. Everything depends on putting down the Yanks; our trade is up, if we don't."

Then starting out, Workfork went to the carriage-box, and took a hasty snack, and the two commenced searching for the runaways. They were pushing their way through bushes and briars, intent on recapturing their prey, when Sniper was seized with a sudden terror, and whispered, —

"Hark! What noise is that?"

"Sho!" whispered back Workfork; "that's only a partridge, drummin' with his wings."

"I tell you it's mor'n that," returned Sniper. "I make sure it's a swamp nigger; I'd ruther meet ten ravin' bears than one of them wild critters. They'd pound you to jelly in a big mortar, an' suck you down their big throats like an alligator. Let's be gwine."

Workfork was also a little nervous, from

the effects of the last night's hard drinking, and quite ready to follow Sniper in his double-quick retreat. Back, back they retraced their steps, not slackening their pace until they reached the old cabin they had left, when Workfork, ashamed of the fear he was in danger of betraying to his associate, bethought him of an excuse for this unseemly haste.

"You see, Sniper," said he, "I was that careless, an' left my gun, so I've come back for't;" and he commenced searching the hut. "The villyuns has done stole it; I'll lay they has! What's I'se to do without any gun? 'Pears like we'd better git out of this are swamp as soon as we can, an' buy us some guns, an' git help to master the runaways;" and the two made haste to harness the horses to the carriage, and having gained the main road, drove rapidly for Windham Village.

IX.

AN ENCOUNTER. THE WILD MAN OF THE SWAMP.

CHAINY and the lads often consulted as to what should be done.

"How long we got tow stay here?" asked Sam, still afflicted with homesickness.

"'Pears like I can't tell," replied the good woman. "We can't 'ford to waste all dat are meat. If we started off an' left it, 'parently we temp' Providence, an' we mought starve."

"But dere aint no cabin, nor nuffin here," said Rafe.

"I know dat," replied Chainy; "but dere's plenty ob trees an' bushes, an' we can make a good shelter, an' wait fur de Lord to 'rect us when to travel. He done saunt us one good friend to help us, an' he can saund us another in his own good 'time;" and with her cheerful, childlike faith, she encouraged herself in

God, and so kind, gentle, and motherly was she that the boys looked up to her almost with reverence.

In truth, Chainy and the little ones really needed a season of rest, and nothing might be gained if they attempted to progress in the unknown wild; they might meet Workfork, looking for them. The good woman thought of these things, and said that it was safest to look for a good hiding-place, near the spring.

"Oh!" exclaimed Rafe, "I know where we can make us a wigwam."

"Wigwam! what's that?" said Sam.

"Why, hi! don't you know?" was the reply. "Dere's an Indin lives in a wigwam, over in the woods, back of mother's cabin, an' I'll lay I ken make one des like it. Come on, Sam; let's find a place."

Sam followed, asking questions, and getting for answer that it was a kind of a cabin, built of poles, bark, and bushes. As Rafe went on explaining how it was made, Sam, comprehending it, said,—

"Why, you know, there's the place where the deer shelter by night; they don't come no more since we killed the old buck."

"Dat's so," replied Rafe; and pressing through the thick bushes, the lads came to a cleared circular space around an oak, which was walled in with underwood and tall saplings. This had been the night camping-ground of the deer, and Rafe said it was a right smart good place for a wigwam.

The two then fell to breaking boughs from the trees, some little distance off, and piling them near the centre oak.

"Dese yer will make mos' amiable roofin'," said Rafe; "an' shed de rain right smart."

When a sufficient quantity were gathered, the boys drew the tops of the sapling toward the trunk of the tree, and fastened them to its horizontal boughs; they then hastened to conduct Aunt Chainy and the little ones to the new abode which was so quickly framed and roofed.

"Why, hi!" said she, "'pears like dis sher

will be nice cabin ; we shall be safe an' comfortable, dat is evidunt."

"We're gwine to make it des as good as a sure-'nuff cabin," said Rafe.

"Can't nobody find us in here," added Sam.

"Dat's so," said Chainy. "I reckon de Fader made dis yer tree grow to keep us safe. Now, I'll go to pickin' moss an' leaves for de beds. 'Pears like dese yer chilluns must have suffin' soft to rest deir limbs on."

"Oh, Aunt Chainy!" called out Hal; "let me help too."

"Dat you shall," was the cheerful answer; and leaving baby Frank, amused seeing Sam and Rafe finish thatching the dwelling, Chainy and Hal went at their work. The little company were as happy as could be in fitting up their temporary home.

"We ken stay here," said Chainy to herself, "till suffin' better turns up. De Lord is dat good to give us dis sher nice place."

Some days were occupied in completing and furnishing their abode, which all the party

enjoyed highly. At meal-time they repaired to their old cooking-stand, which they called the kitchen, their store of venison still furnishing them with delicious meat.

Chainy, ever pleasant and thoughtful, planned to have the children spend some time in play; and what with play, and what with getting wood for the cooking-fire and adding thatching to their habitation, they were mostly busy and happy. Yet sometimes the hours wore heavily to the good woman, for, at best, this retreat seemed but temporary, and might be disturbed by their worst enemy, Workfork.

Were her fears groundless? We shall see.

One day, when Sam and Rafe were out searching for roots and berries, suddenly they came upon a company of rough-looking men, whom they knew at once to be in pursuit of their party. The ruffians were sitting down on the grass, eating their lunch and drinking from a bottle which was freely passed from one to another. As the boys caught sight of

them, they had plainly heard their voices, and were looking round to see what it meant.

"Hist!" whispered Workfork, for he was the leader of the gang, "the game is comin'! Didn't I tell ye it'd be easy ketchin' 'em?" at the same time starting up and looking eagerly around. "So, Sniper, you go that way, Patrick Conner this way, an' I'll see what I an' the rest can do in the brush;" and in a minute, the half-dozen were scattered in as many directions.

Sam and Rafe had slid down the bank, and hidden under a thicket of briars. The several scouts looked long and carefully, but in vain, and at length returned to their encampment.

"Haint found 'em, hey?" asked Workfork. "Stupid! you've let the rascals slip through your fingers; jingo! if you haint!"

"They didn't slip through your'n, I reckon!" retorted Sniper.

"You shet up," replied Workfork; "I'se the cap'n of this are comp'ny, an' it's fur

me to order, an' fur you to obey." Then, more pleasantly, "Wall, we're on the trail, an' we mought as well be movin'. As I said, gemmen, if we takes 'em, we'll go shares, an' you'll make a putty little fortin!"

So the pursuers started anew, half going forward, and half on the route by which they had come.

Rafe and Sam, under the thicket, listened, eager to hear their voices, and judge of the direction they had taken.

"I reckon they wont find us," said Rafe, drawing a long breath as the sounds grew less in the distance.

"But some on 'em is gwine right whar Aunt Chainy is," said Sam.

"Dat's bad!" replied Rafe. "What's we'se to do?"

"We must do somethin'," said Sam. "It wont do to let Aunt Chainy be hurt. I tell you, Rafe, I feel as big as a man, an' you is 'most as big."

"I!" said Rafe; "I'se bigger than you is!"

I reckon we can take care of Aunt Chainy. Didn't we kill the old buck?"

"That we did," replied Sam; and the two, starting up from their hiding-place, directed their steps to their dwelling.

It was nearly noon, and Chainy had left Frank asleep on the moss in the greenwood cabin, and was busy getting dinner, answering Hal's pleasant prattle as she roasted the meat.

At the instant Sam and Rafe came in sight Workfork and two men appeared.

"Blast yer carcass, old woman!" shouted the driver. "You've gin me a putty chase, an' I'll show you what's what! I'll tie you tow the fust tree, an' whale you within an inch of yer life!"

At sight of him, Chainy fell helpless to the ground, and little Hal called out,—

"Go 'way, bad man; you sha'n't touch my Aunt Chainy."

The savage kicked him over, and drawing out a cord, was about to execute his threat

of binding the helpless woman to the tree, when one of his men said,—

"She's done for't, now. Why don't you bring her to fust?"

"Here, you rascal," cried Workfork to Sam, "bring us some water!"

"I'se nothin' to bring it in," said Sam, coolly. "Couldn't you lend me your hat?"

"Look here, you whelp," said Workfork, "if you don't bring it lively, I'll whip you fust. I mean tow dress you all down afore I've done!" and he brandished a cowskin, to give effect to his words. "Off with you, Rafe, an' help him find some water!" and the two boys hastened down the declivity, where flowed their well-known spring. Meanwhile Chainy slowly opened her eyes, at which all the malice in Workfork's nature seemed to be stirred.

"Aint quite so dead as you made believe, is you, old jade? Thought you could come it over me, did ye? Wal, ye see I'm used to your tricks, an' now I'm gwine to treat you as you deserve. I'm gwine to let ye have a

little taste of suthin' you don't git every day. You done cheated me out of my breakfast!" and he gave her a smart cut across her face with his cowhide.

"An' cost us all this are traipsing intow the swamp," said Sniper, as he gave her a blow with a stout stick.

"Oh, don't, massa, don't!" pleaded the helpless woman, putting up her hands, as if to ward off the blows.

"Be done, Sniper," said the driver, authoritatively, "whippin' isn't the work afore us jest now. That's too good for the old truck!" Then seizing Chainy rudely by the arm, and dragging her toward a tree, he said, "This way with ye, an' you'll have sich a treat as will put the life into your old bones, I'll warrant. Yer aint o' much 'count, noways, now the Yanks has come, and niggers don't bring much. If I takes ye along you'll be givin' us more strouble than twenty sich as you is worth in the market, so I'll jest dispose of you on the spot. I haint had a right smart good

time tormentin' a nigger for mor'n a year. Can't afford to let this opportunity slip; don't recur every day!"

Then drawing from his coat pocket a small iron chain, he commenced binding her to the oak. Chainy was almost frozen with terror. She could form no distinct idea of the terrible fate that awaited her; but the murderous light that shot from the driver's eyes, and the fiendish leer that rested on his pitiless face, filled her with the fear that some fell design possessed her tormentor. Her eyes seemed starting from their sockets, and an unearthly pallor overspread her wrinkled features, making her look truly frightful. She appeared to be making endeavors to plead with him for mercy; but so extreme was her fear that the words died on her lips.

Workfork bound her securely to the tree, then turning to Sniper, said, —

"Now, old fellar, jest set them chaps to work an' pile the dry limbs round the old woman, an' we'll celebrate Fourth of July."

Sniper and his companions did as they were ordered, gathering the loose wood from the thickets and heaping it around the victim. Workfork assisted, but worked leisurely, as if to lengthen out the suspense of the object of his hate.

"Wont we warm her up? We'll take the ager chills out of her!" he exclaimed, with great satisfaction, as the dreadful preparations went on. At length all was ready, and the driver, going to the spot where Chainy's cooking fire still burned dimly, took up a brand, at first bidding his subordinates to do the same, then countermanding the order, saying, —

"No, no; this are sport I must enjoy all tow myself!" and returned to Chainy, and shaking the flaming torch before her, he said, "Now, old jade, you'll hafter do more screech-in' an' groanin' an' prayin' than you ever did in all the whippin's you ever had. You see, Sniper an' I is jest a gwine to see how a nigger like you will look a-roasting!"

Chainy comprehended her situation. At first one piercing shriek rent the air, then she fell to praying, and awaited her tormentor's movements with strange composure. Workfork stooped down to ignite the brush-heap at its base. Just then the sharp report of a rifle was heard, and the murderer rolled over on the ground, covered with blood.

It seems that as Sam and Rafe loitered by the spring, to give "Aunt Chainy time to rest a bit," as they expressed it, they were startled by seeing a strange-looking man descending from a lofty cypress, and stalking toward them with a gun on his shoulder, over the bogs of the swamp.

"What's de strouble?" said he, as he came near.

"That slave-driver is gwine to whip Aunt Chainy," said Sam, softly.

"Aunt Chainy!" said the swamp-man. "I'll see to him!" then cautiously approached Workfork and his company till he found an opening to take aim, when he fired.

Workfork bounded forward with a yell of anguish, and fell. The ball had passed through his arm, and lodged in his side. His comrades, who were poor whites, turned and fled, and meeting the rest of their party returning from a fruitless search, told them that they were pursued by a large gang of armed negroes, who had killed Workfork. Sniper was a great coward, as well as the rest, and they now took to their heels in confusion, some of the number even throwing down their guns in their haste to distance the dreaded swamp-men.

Sam and Rafe brought water in a dipper, which Aunt Chainy had made from a wild gourd some time before, and bathing her forehead, she soon revived.

The swamp-man was clad in the skins of wild beasts, mostly of deer-skin, with a cap of shaggy, coarse fur, suggestive of the bear.

As Chainy became conscious, and saw him, she asked, feebly, as she raised herself on her elbow, —

"Is you friend?"

"That I is," answered the maroon.

A something in his brawny face and wild-wood air gave her confidence, and she exclaimed,—

"Praise de Lord! you'll help us, den;" and as she looked around, catching a sight of Workfork, she recalled his threat, and said, with a shocked look,—

"What is it? Who did it? Is he dead?"

But without answering her, the swamp-man and Sam and Rafe helped her rise, and led her to the cabin, saying she must rest.

"Is we safe from the bad men?" asked Chainy.

"Yes, dat we is," said Rafe; "they've run off."

"They clipped it like deer," added Sam.

When Chainy had rested and recovered from her fright, she asked the swamp-man how he came to find them.

"I've kept watch of you ever since Will Forbes left," he replied.

"Has you?" said Chainy, wonderingly.

She then told him some particulars of their history and adventures, adding that she wished to be in a safe place until she could find a way of getting Sam back to his father's house, and Hal and Frank also to their own home.

The maroon nodded assent, and sitting down on the log, pointed to the skin of the buck, stretched for drying, on the boughs opposite, and asked,—

"Who did that?"

Chainy replied that Sam and Rafe did it.

"Big hunters!" said he, with a smile. He seemed much pleased with his new acquaintance, and drew from Chainy other particulars of her life, to which he listened with chained attention, often ejaculating,—

"Is dat so? S'prizin'! s'prizin'!"

Chainy asked him if he knew of any safe dwelling, where they could live in peace.

"Yes, dat I do," replied he, with animation; "dere's my cabin."

"Can't de slave-driver find it?"

"No danger of that," replied the swamp-man. "I knows every bog of the swamp, every leaf of the forest. I'se got safe cabin; built it 'spressly for such as you. When you gits rested, I take you there."

He then returned to the scene of the fray, to look after the body of Workfork,—it was not to be found. Where could it be? Had he feigned himself dead, and crawled off unobserved, or had his comrades returned for him? It was an unsolved mystery.

It was necessary to remain till the next day, on account of the shock Chainy had received.

Late in the afternoon, Sam and Rafe brought the dinner into the little green cabin, and the inmates, having recovered from the startling occurrences of the day sufficiently to eat, partook of the meal with a keen relish.

The quiet of the evening was undisturbed by sounds of strife; nought but the croaking of the frogs, the singing of the katydids, the

chirping of the crickets, and the occasional call of the whippoorwill, was heard, and the little family slept in peace until the morning broke, when the swamp-man was astir, and getting breakfast with the aid of the lads ; and having spread the table after Chainy's mode, they all sat down and ate ; after which, the maroon, in his business-like way, arose, and motioned for them to follow. Giving his gun to Rafe, and his game to Sam, he took Hal and Frank in his arms, and was starting on, when Sam called out,—

“Must we leave the stag's horns, an' stag's hide? Can't we tote 'em too?”

“Not now,” said the maroon ; “I will come back an' git 'em for you !” and springing down the declivity, he was soon striding from bog to bog, with wonderful activity. To follow him was no easy matter ; and just as the trio behind were pitching into the swamp, with the attempt to imitate his motions, he turned and came back, and sitting down on a juniper bush, called a council of war.

"Dese sher white children'll die," he said, "if we takes 'em through the swamp to my cabin. If they was black, it would be bad enough for 'em, but the pison-oak an' lots of other things is death to 'em."

"What can we do?" asked Chainy.

"It wont do to take 'em through that part of the swamp," said the maroon; "they'd breathe the pison bref, an' swell up an' die. I mought take 'em down the canal-path, to the shingle country, where they'd be safe; an' if we paid a trader, he'd see 'em safe hum!"

Tears of joy shone in the gladsome light of Chainy's beaming face. She had nerved herself to the utmost, to save the children from a dreadful fate, and now what a great relief to hear of any prospect of final deliverance! She even prattled to herself, in her childish way, —

"'Pears like if ole Chainy sinks to de grave in dish sher swamp, dese are little children wont starve. I'se dat glad for 'em, I is! De Lord is dat good!"

X.

THE SYLVAN LODGE. FOR WHOM WAS IT BUILT?

IT was decided to encamp for the night in their old quarters, and after a good breakfast off the game, to set out on the new route, planned by them aroon. Accordingly, when all had partaken of the morning meal, and the sun had broken through the clouds of fog, the party addressed themselves to their journey. After retracing their way for some distance they reached the canal, and found good walking on the smooth tow-path.

Sam was quite elated with the hope that some trader could be induced to take him to his home, and had his mind made up that it would surely be the first man they met.

"Isn't it, most time to see a trader?" asked he of the swamp-man, as he trudged close by his side,

"May be right smart while before we sees one," said the hunter.

"But I wants to see one right smart quick," replied Sam, feeling a qualm of homesickness.

"Dat you does," said Chainy, compassionately; "an' we'll find one, des as soon as we can."

For miles they walked thus on the borders of the canal till they came to a point in the swamp where the maroon thought it would be safe to cross to the High Ridge, or shingle country, with the white children. Chainy and the lads now left the firm land for spongy soil, and attempted to follow the hunter, in bounding from bog to bog, and in maintaining a footing on the half-submerged, rotten logs, that partly paved the way, by clinging to the adjacent shrubs.

No Indian knew the forests of his nativity better than did this woodsman every part of this vast swampy region. He understood at a glance just how firm the bogs were, and with Frank and Hal in his arms, threaded his

way, with surprising agility through the tangled green-brier, brake, osiers, and the myriad slime-loving plants. The tardy trio were often distanced, and their guide hidden from them by masses of dense foliage. Indeed, in their attempts to hasten their pace, they often slipped from the mouldy logs, and after floundering, in danger of sinking irrecoverably, managed to creep upon them again, with the help of the swamp-man, who, having deposited his charge in the thick branches of the cypress, had returned to their rescue, and lifting them up one by one, bore them to a secure footing, fast by the trunk of some giant tree, laughing at their awkwardness, and cheering them by saying the swamp mud would cure the fevers, and adding,—

“De bes’ of it is, de white man can’t pick dish sher path.”

The maroon was conducting them by a short route to his home, which it would have taken them long miles of travel to reach by the wide circuit of the canal.

"Where you gwine to tote me?" asked Hal, who had for some time been looking over the woodman's shoulder at the strange scenery.

"To my green cabin," replied the guide.

"Has you got any little boy?" asked Hal.

"No," said the maroon, sadly; "I lives all alone."

After a while the travelling began to improve. The bogs were nearer together, and less inclined to submerge at the pressure of the foot. The logs being mostly out of water were less slippery, and afforded a safer pathway whenever they chanced to lay in the right direction. A strong growth of sedge-grass, in some places, had rooted and decayed and grown again, for long years, until a miniature hillock was formed. These were more common, and the voracious vegetation seemed as if drinking up the swamp slops. If only the impenetrable cedar boughs that roofed the jungle could be cut away, and the sun, for once in ages, could get a fair peep at the remaining scattered puddles, he would surely

exhale them into vapor. In taking this route, our travellers had avoided almost entirely the vicinities where poisonous plants abounded. The pawpaw, the thalictrum, rank and tall, water-hemlock, conium, and cicuta, in parts of the wilderness, filled the air with a nauseous fragrance, so sickening that no white person could live under its influence. Yet it did not so easily affect the colored man, — a kind Providence had thus fenced him in when once he had attained this “city of refuge.”

A sandy belt, sustaining a thick growth of pines, was reached by the swamp-man, and putting Frank and Hal in a place of safety, he returned to help those behind. It was well he did so, for they sadly needed his aid.

“Oh!” said Chainy, “’pears like dat pison air’ll kill us!”

“Oh, no,” replied the hunter, “only a little mite strouble, dat all, nothin’ like what ’twould be if we’d gone to that man. When you all git rested in my home, you’ll be well again;” and he tenderly took up the exhausted woman,

bore her to his dwelling near by, and laid her on a nice bed of deerskin filled with moss, feathers, and leaves.

In a moment more he had placed Frank and Hal beside her, and then hastened out to succor Sam and Rafe. A feeder, or branch of the canal, was near the cabin, and the company might have reached it by the two days' travel on the tow-path; but at the end of their journey they would be under the necessity of swimming the canal, which was both wide and deep at this point, unless, indeed, a swamp-merchant's boat should happen in sight. Sam was greatly taken up with the hermit's abode. It was, indeed, the prettiest in all the wild, but was more of a lodge than a cabin. It could be seen, at a glance, that he had been many years in building it, and had been assisted at every step by nature.

The site of the lodge, or summer retreat, was well chosen; it was a gentle elevation; the soil was sand and loam, and every green thing flourished. Sam's ideas had been much

expanded in his travels, and when not too home-sick he was all eager curiosity. He noted that lodge, and planned, when a man, to have one like it, for summer, in the piny wood where his father's cabin stood. The hermit had also a nice warm log-cabin for winter.

Sam noticed that the lodge was formed by setting out rows of young trees, enclosing a space some twenty feet square, in the centre of which was a noble tulip-tree. The hedge, designed for the walls of the dwelling, was kept close by being pruned on the inside, but allowed to grow naturally on the other. Lithe willows and strong walnuts, when high enough, were bent and fastened to the centre tree for a frame. Eglantines, climbing roses, honeysuckles, jasmines, and other creepers were set at work to clapboard and shingle the tenement, and well they did their task, rejoicing in luxuriance.

What with countless days of pruning and training, the hermit saw his lodge getting built by degrees, and, as the years rolled on,

as he busied himself in furnishing it, the lagging time became swift-winged.

Sam peered about, all curiosity, examining closely the chairs of gnarled oak, and the drinking-vessels, or goblets, white as ivory, made of the wood of the tulip-tree. He meant to furnish his mother's cabin with some made like them. He noticed, too, that the hard earthen floor was almost covered with curiously woven mats of colored reeds, imparting a neat and tasteful appearance. He would ask the hermit to show him how to make them, and then, when he got home, what good times Tomtit and all the rest of the brood would have braiding mats for mother! Leaving Sam to explore the curious sylvan dwelling, and project improvements in his father's house, let us see what is the matter with Chainy this fine morning, for there she is sitting in the oaken arm-chair, crying! Not an hour ago she awoke, refreshed, and the quiet security of the pretty dwelling soothed her worn spirit.

The hermit had a cup of coffee, a corn-cake, and nice slices of dried venison all ready for her when she arose, and, the children still sleeping, Chainy, himself, with Sam and Rafe, sat down to eat.

The slave-woman's heart overflowed with thankfulness; she felt that the Lord had delivered them, and as she ate she praised his name.

"Does the Lord always hear your prayers?" asked observant Sam, as, having finished, he rose from the table.

"Yes, honey, dat he does!" was the reply.

"Didn't you pray to have him give you back your Trolo?" asked he; for he had heard her tell the story of her grief.

"Dat I did! Oh, yes, how I did pray de Fader from sun to sun!"

"But he didn't hear you," said Sam; "and sometimes I think it aint no use to pray!"

"God did hear her," cried the maroon, deeply moved, and rising to his feet. "*I am Trolo!*"

"Trolo ! Trolo !" exclaimed Chainy, gazing earnestly in his face, then falling 'on his neck and kissing him. "My Trolo ! Yes, yes, dat's so !" Then, in the fulness of her joy, she cried, saying, as she could find voice, "De Lord is dat good ! dat good ! But 'pears like it can't be dat you is my boy ! I thought de hunters shot my Trolo, great many years ago !".

"An' he got well again, and is alive now, for I am he !" said the maroon.

"De Lord be praised for dat !" said Chainy. "Many's de time 'pears like if dese ole eyes could see him dey neber weep agin ! An' now I'se so glad I can't do nothin' but cry for joy."

"I am your own Trolo, mother !" cried the maroon, and he clasped her in his arms ; while Chainy, in excess of happiness, continued to sob like a child.

Oh, it was a scene to make heaven glad, — the meeting of that lone mother and son, so long separated by the cruel hand of slavery, and as the hours swept by, they poured out

the pent-up griefs of long years, and found healing in sympathy and love.

"De Lord is dat good!" Chainy continued to repeat, as she listened to her son's recital of his adventures, after losing sight of her on the night of their escape.

"I reckon he is," replied he; "I didn't know I was makin' a hum for you, mother; but day an' night I have longed for you to come, and kep' building it, building it, feeling in my heart dat I must, but neber dreamed you'd some day be here. De Fader saunt you, dat is sartin!"

"De Lord, he does hear prayer," fervently echoed Chainy, turning to Sam, who just then came running in with his arms full of reeds, to ask the hermit to teach him to weave mats. "I wants Sam always to remember dat, an' if he is in strouble he can pray."

"I mean to pray to have him let me go home!" said Sam, much impressed.

Frank and Hal were moaning in their sleep. Chainy went to them, and found their

faces and hands covered with large blotches and fine fiery pimples. The quick eye of the maroon saw it, and he knew, despite all his care, that they were sick by exposure to the poisonous air of the swamp. Hastening out, he soon returned with an armful of a healing emolient plant, well known to himself as in some cases a preventive and cure for the poison of certain other plants, and rubbing the faces and hands of the little boys, hoped that it would relieve them.

But the healing application had not been in season to stop the effects of the poison; they were covered from head to foot with the itching, burning eruption, and cried piteously in their pain. With Sam it was quite different; the antidote seemed to work wonders, and to arrest the poison, as soon as he felt it coming on. The hunter said that he would soon be quite well, but shook his head apprehensively as he saw how sick the little ones were.

As Frank restlessly tossed on the bed, and cried, Chainy took him in her arms and

walked to and fro, singing a lullaby, but to little purpose.

"Poor little thing! darlin' infant baby! What Aunt Chainy do? what Aunt Chainy do?"

"I must go to Cypress Ridge," said the hermit, "and see if I can't find something to help them!"

At the sound of the name, Sam was all attention.

"Let me go too," said he, "there's where we'll meet the traders who'll take me back to Piny Wood!"

"You shall go," replied the hermit; "I reckon there'll be some way of sendin' you there!"

Chainy filled the hermit's game-bag with food for their dinner, and telling Sam to be sure and come back if he did not find some one to show him home, she blessed him, and promised to pray for him. The hermit, giving Chainy and Rafe directions about taking

care of the children, and dutifully kissing his newly-found mother, left, saying, —

“It’s lots harder gwine away, now you is here !”

Sam followed, after he had bidden Rafe and Chainy a second good-by.

XI.

SAM MAKES A DISCOVERY.

WITH quick steps, the maroon and Sam went down to the feeder, or canal branch, which lay at the foot of the slope.

"Where is the boat?" asked Sam.

"It's safe in its hiding-place," replied the hermit, as he drew it out of the thick bushes that fringed the stream.

"Oh," exclaimed Sam, "what a pretty boat!"

"This is a canoe," said the hermit; "I hollowed it out of a gum-tree."

"Did you?" exclaimed Sam. "I wish there was a canal and a little boat at our house; I'd row Tomtit an' the rest in it!"

"Can't have everything we want," was the reply, as the two stepped in.

It was a bright day, and a half-hour's row-

ing brought them to the large canal. Sam was delighted with the canoe ride, and with exhilarated interest saw wonderful sights every moment. The canal passed through the heart of the Great Swamp, unveiling the wildest scenery imaginable. Magnificent cedars and magnolias, immense cypresses, elegant hackmetacks, and catalpas mingled with sturdy gums, oaks, and tulip trees, to make twilight at noonday, and to complete the gloom of the forest; from numerous trees hung the long dishevelled moss, funeral tokens for the loss of the sun.

All this strange, unique scenery had long talked to the heart of the swamp-man, and caused him to think reverently of the great Father, and of his wonderful works; but it seemed to Sam that he could never tire of gazing at the dim old woods, and then at the marvellous array of flowers that, won by the line of light opened by the canal, bloomed on its banks, and dressed their corals as they were mirrored in the water. There were

old friends and strangers grouped together, — wake-robins, lilies of the valley, violets, and anemones. The trumpet-flower climbed among the tall trees, and the delicate fox-glove and harebell, with gorgeous individuals of the orchis family, best loved sequestered nooks. Plats of thick-standing phlox rejoiced in the light, looking like a fairy army, in plumes of pinks.

"Oh, wouldn't Lottie like them posies!" exclaimed Sam; and when he saw the brilliant cardinal flowers, he could contain himself no longer, but begged the hermit to stop and let him pick a handful, for they stood close by the water's edge.

"You shall have them," was the pleasant reply, at the same time gathering a hand's swath, as the canoe passed by; "but they'll fade before you reach Lottie, and you'll find plenty of 'em that way."

Stopping for a little while, to rest and eat their snack, the maroon made what speed he could, till at length the shadows of evening

brooded thickly over the forest, when, fearing for Sam, he looked for a shelter. The bat and the owl came forth from their hiding-places, — the former flitting and boldly flapping its wings in their faces, and the latter solemnly hooting and welcoming the darkness.

Myriads of frogs mingled treble and bass in clamorous, croaking concert, celebrating the praises of their slimy green coverts, the beauty and convenience of their plashy habitations. Never had frogs such cities and villages since the world began; never did they flourish in such undisturbed prosperity.

Fireflies glistened on fern, flower, and leaf, like so many sparkling diamonds.

Sam did not weary of the shifting show; and the swamp-man loved the sights and sounds of night; but he felt anxious to accomplish the object of his journey; otherwise, he would have encamped on the boughs of some century-lived cypress, and been lulled to sleep by the varying serenade and his own musings.

He knew that not unfrequently panthers and bears lurked in the thicket. For himself, he had no fear of either, as he was skilled in wild-beast warfare ; but if attacked, he might fail to protect Sam, hence he was the more anxious to reach his quarters for the night. At length, gleaming through the darkness, and an opening in the foliage, he saw a cluster of phosphorescent pines. He well knew the place, and lost no time in mooring his canoe, and in conducting his young charge to the hospitable cabin of Kize Carter ; for, notwithstanding the savage hound that kept guard, it was hospitable. Calling off the dog, he had a fire kindled on the well-swept hearth, — to get supper and to keep off the chilliness of the evening, — and bade his guests be seated and make themselves at home.

Kize Carter was a poor white, — a swamp-merchant. Along the line of the great canal which traverses the swamp lengthwise, connecting the waters of the Chesapeake with Albermarle Sound, are located a rough set of

persons, — poor whites, — who trade with the maroons. These merchants obtain their supplies, and convey the produce of the swamp principally, if not entirely, to Norfolk. The articles which the negroes require are for the most part salted provisions, Indian corn, coarse clothes, and tools, and what they furnish in payment are chiefly staves and shingles. These traders being low whites, whom slavery had robbed of a chance to engage in getting an honest livelihood, and were thus necessitated to seize the only means to avoid starvation, which was stealthily and adroitly to pursue this unlawful trade.

As it is a difficult matter to enforce the laws, the buyers and sellers of the wilderness alike avoid detection, and ply their business in undisturbed prosperity.

Our heroes were glad of the friendly shelter of the trafficker's cabin, and directly they sat down to a supper of slices of dried beef, boiled bacon, and roasted potatoes.

The landlord, — that anomaly, a fat "poor

white," that contradiction, a rich-poor white, — having arisen to let the new-comers enter, again blocked up the doorway with his round figure. As our travellers began to eat, the trader knocked the ashes from his pipe, and replenishing it with tobacco from an old, greasy-looking box, handed it to his daughter Cretia to light, and settled back in his chair for a talk.

"Come out of the swamp, I reckon."

"Yes," replied the maroon.

"Haint I seen you afore?"

"I reckon so," was the reply; "I'se eat here afore to-day."

"So I reckoned," said the trader; "I reckoned I'd seed you afore!" and placing the lighted pipe which Cretia had handed him in the right corner of his mouth, he asked, —

"What's the news your way?"

"Nothin' much," said the maroon.

"Wal," said the trader, "there's a great hubbub this way. Jeff Davis he wants to be president in place of old Abe, and he's started

the biggest rebellion, or revolution; but it don't harm *our* business. It beats all natur', it does, sir. Ye see, slaves is bound to run away, now their masters has gone to war, an' I aint the man to blame 'em nuther; the more the merrier for me; and I'd run away, too, afore I'd fight for Jeff, — that is, if I could run."

"Don't any soldiers trouble you?" asked the maroon. "Is you safe?"

"Safe as a mouse in a mill," replied the merchant. "If the United States should *try* to oust us, ye see it'd cost mor'n it would come to, and the Confederates has too much to do to think on us. Deserters sometimes comes along, an' we shows 'em how we manages, an' they hires out, or sets up for 'em-selves. Only a week ago a poor fellar 'scaped here all in tatters an' rags, an' I never pitied a man so much in all my life. Cretia, she made him a nice partridge broth, and fitted him up in my clothes that I'd outgrown, an' in three days you wouldn't ha' known him.

He went to work as my man, gettin' out staves an' shingles ; but here he comes !” and as the trader finished speaking a man entered, and taking off his cap and hanging it on a nail in the corner of the room, drew a chair by the wide fireplace and sat down. The hound, Music, followed him in, wagging his tail, and crouched beside him.

Sam eyed the man from the instant he came in, and after a moment, edged up to him and looked eagerly into his face.

“ Why, Sam !” exclaimed the new-comer, catching him up in his arms, “ how came you here ?”

“ Oh, father, father !” cried Sam ; “ I’s so glad ! halloa ! my crackey !” and jumping out of his arms he danced, turned summersaults, and cut all sorts of capers. As for the father, he was too happy, and tears of joy chased each other over his cheeks.

“ Did you come arter me ?” asked Sam, as he stopped to take breath.

"Yes, Sam. You seen anything of Lottie?" was the reply.

"No; is she lost?"

"She left hum to find you, Sam, a few days arter you was missing. Nothin' would do but she must go, an' I didn't think on't so much at the time, but arter she was really gone, it struck to my heart; an' I thought I'd rather die than not set out to see what's become of yees. So I told your mother I was gwine, for I couldn't sleep, nor eat, nor smoke. At fust she went agin it; but arter she fell to prayin' she felt better about it, — you know, Sam, she aluz prays 'bout everything, — an' she gin her consent; though for that matter I should gone if she hadn't, I was that sot on it."

"How did you know I was hid in the swamp?"

"I didn't know it," was the reply, "I s'pect your mother'd say it was in answer to her prayers. I never thought of finding you here;" and he gazed fondly on his son.

XII.

TRouble IN THE MANSION.

WYATT Hall was the name of the home of Frank and Hal. It was a fine old establishment in Eastern Virginia. Mr. Beverly Manson, their father, had his plantation well stocked with slaves, — about one hundred and fifty in number.

In early life Mr. and Mrs. Manson regretted the existence of slavery, and often expressed themselves as in favor of a condition of society like that of the North, where the laboring classes are paid regular wages and are encouraged to have homes of their own.

But, as time passed, they loved more the gains of slavery, and became imbruted to the system. Adopting the false views of their political leaders, they came to think it part and parcel of the highest form of civilization.

The division of mankind into the two great classes of master and slave, it was argued, was the most desirable. They also professed to think, with many other Southern people, that slavery was a divine institution, and that the working classes ought everywhere to be slaves; that the family relation ought not to exist only in case of the master — denying all right of the poor to husband, wife, and child, — all right to resist oppression; claiming that God is a respecter of persons and on the side of the oppressor; that he does *not* lend a listening ear to the humble; that he does not think upon the poor, but has created them to serve the rich, as the horse, the ox, and the mule serve man, in drudgery and unpaid toil; that when God gave man dominion over the fish of the sea and the fowl of the air, and over the living creatures on the face of the earth, he also gave him dominion over his fellow-man.

They ignored the idea that God made of one blood all nations of men that dwell on the

face of the earth. They adopted a new religion, just the opposite of the Christian religion; the grand feature of it was *not* to "do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you," but rather "might makes right," saying to the slave "Thou shalt serve me, for thou art weak, and I am strong."

"I was never so happy in my life," said Mrs. Manson, the mother of little Frank and Hal, a few days before the opening of our story, "as since I adopted these views; they reconcile so many difficulties."

"Ah, yes, indeed," replied Mr. Manson, "that's so. The truth is, this half-way belief in slavery only makes one miserable. It's 'whole hog or nothing,' with me, after this. I've done with making apologies for slavery; it's *the* thing—the system—the divine institution, and it's the mission of the Southern people to establish it in the different countries of this continent. First, we must have all the States and Territories well pervaded with it."

"I think I know a thing or two," broke in

Mrs. Manson, in a lively way ; " the ' Knights of the Golden Circle ' unite for the purpose of extending our institution ; tell me, now, isn't it so ? "

" Why, how should I know ? " asked Mr. Manson with a suppressed smile.

" Pretty story if you don't," was the rejoinder. " You a member, and don't know what the order is for ! "

" Well, if I did know, you do not suppose I could reveal the secrets ? " said the husband.

" Ah, no, of course not ; but every one says this much, — that it is for the general purpose of extending and perpetuating slavery ; the secrets are the ways and means planned to accomplish this, I reckon."

" You do, hey ? " said Mr. Manson, knocking the ashes from his cigar.

" But I don't reckon," added Mrs. Manson, in a pouting way, " that you'd tell me one of the secrets of your Grand Order for love or money, — not to save my life ! "

" Probably not," was the cool reply ; then

humorously, "Now, wife, don't be after getting up a scene, making it appear that you are about to give up the ghost, because you can not learn from me what are the secrets of the 'Knights;' I shall tell you a story if you do. Once upon a time there were two old ladies, as Washington Irving relates, who lived on one side of a street in a thickly-settled place, and being maiden ladies, of course they made it a point to know who their neighbors were. Now it so happened that a family moved into the vacant house just opposite them early one morning before they were astir, and the good ladies busied themselves all the day in making inquiries as to who they were; but to no purpose. Nobody knew; they could gain no information whatever on a point so vital to their peace"—

"Now, don't, Beverly," said Mrs. Manson, still pouting, yet smiling in spite of herself.

"As you may suppose," continued he, "the good ladies slept little that night but whiled away the hours of midnight in conjectures re-

specting who the neighbors opposite could possibly be. They arose with the early dawn to pursue their investigations; but, alas, as fruitlessly as before. Days, weeks, and months passed, and the ladies were no wiser. At length their feverish suspense became insupportable; they could endure it no longer, and, one after the other, they pined away and died, simply from unsatisfied curiosity; so I advise you not to take the disease, for there's no telling how hard it might go with you."

"What an idea!" exclaimed Mrs. Manson. "I've no notion of dying, let me tell you; I intend to live till this war is through, and see our institution planted and thriving all through New England, the Western States, and the Territories; I sha'n't kick the bucket till then, mind you, Knights or no Knights. But it's a burning shame that we ladies aren't admitted to the Order. Who does so much for the Confederacy as we do? We deny ourselves of rich dress, that we may have money to clothe our soldiers; we rob ourselves of ease and

needful rest to make their clothes. Yet you men take all the glory of everything that's accomplished. I'd like to see justice done, I should indeed; but I reckon I must await the verdict of the impartial historian, and if it isn't recorded by him that this glorious uprising of the South originated and was carried on mainly by the efforts of us women, I'm greatly mistaken."

"He'll give you your due, of course," said Mr. Manson, complacently.

"That's all we claim," said Mrs. Manson. "I only wish Frank and Hal were grown to manhood; I'd send them off to the war this very day!"

"You would, hey?" asked Mr. Manson.

"That I would, and if I had twenty sons, they should all go, and more than all that, if I was a man, I'd go myself. Talk about Knights of the Golden Circle and a secret league. It seems to me that you men aren't half awake to the responsibilities of the hour."

"Maybe not," replied Mr. Manson; "but

what more can we do? We pour out money and treasure free as water, and our armies are filling the land. Already our lines of defences reach from Harper's Ferry to Norfolk, and as many as one hundred and fifty thousand armed men are in Virginia alone. Fifteen thousand are at Richmond. We are making ready to pour down upon Washington; we are sure of the capital"—

"So I've heard for months," replied Mrs. Manson; "but I do not see any real advance in that direction. It's 'all talk and no eider,' as the Indian said. More 'do' and less 'say' would suit me better, I confess."

"No advance! Why, wife, what can you be thinking of?. I take it our generals know what they are about. They are fortifying and making themselves impregnable. Thousands upon thousands of our slaves are employed upon the fortifications from sunrise till sunset, day after day."

"That may be," returned Mrs. Manson, "but what is the use of it? We are putting

ourselves upon the defensive, when our boast has been for years that we would be on the offensive ;— we would carry the war into the enemy's country, and make them swallow our terms, or perish. We never planned to act like moles, and dig and hide ourselves in the sand. It's such an inglorious mode of warfare that we ladies have no patience with it. If we could only manage affairs a little while, we'd bring them Yanks to terms. We wouldn't give them a chance to pour down upon us like Goths and Vandals as they are ; we'd have them routed, hip and thigh, on their own soil. Strange our leaders cannot do as they said they would,—invade the enemy's country, and subdue them there."

"Nonsense, wife ! Why not have a little more patience?"

"I have had quite too much of it already," was the reply. "At this rate, we shall soon be out of everything eatable, except the few things we raise on our plantation. If Jeff

don't move faster, we shall be ruined, and I shall tell him so the next time I see him."

"Why, wife, our leaders know what they are about. If they do not advance into the North, common Christian charity leads us to conclude that they have good reasons for their course. Prepare yourself for a surprise, Amelia; great strategic purposes are being matured by our generals."

"That's what I am complaining of," replied the wife, "so much *planning* and so little *doing*. Pray, what have Jeff and the rest accomplished since this revolution commenced?"

"I am surprised, wife, that you should ask such a question. The commencement of the revolution dates back full fifty years,—ever since any of our number dreamed of secession. Step by step we've brought the Northerners to terms. We have really ruled the country; most of the Presidents have been chosen from the Slave States, at least a larger proportion than our white population would warrant; this was allowed by the obsequious, cringing

Northerners in order to conciliate us, their masters. There was the Missouri Compromise, which really yielded the whole thing, allowing us a footing in certain Territories. The Fugitive Slave Bill, you cannot have forgotten that. Didn't we come it over the dough-faces when we made that law? Why, every man, woman, and child of the North was bound to turn dog, and help us retake our stray property! Just what the miserable descendants of the Puritans are fitted for,—to help hunt runaways. If that confounded ship that brought over the hypocritical Pilgrim Fathers to this country, had sunk in mid-ocean, we should never have been put to the trouble of furnishing their hated descendants with congenial employment!

"But have you forgotten how serviceable we have made them to us? Have you forgotten the concessions of Webster, and how, having committed himself to our policy, he held fast with the motto, *nulla vestigia retrorsum?*

"Then to speak more particularly of our leaders, you quite ignore the important agency of our Hon. Secretary Floyd. Here is a paragraph which I cut from the Richmond 'Enquirer' some little time ago: 'The facts we are about to state are official and indisputable. Under a single order of the late Secretary of War, the Hon. Mr. Floyd, made during the last year, there were 150,000 improved muskets and rifles transferred from the Springfield Armory, Mass., and Watervliet Arsenal, N. Y., to different arsenals of the South. The total number of improved arms, thus supplied to five depositories at the South by a single order of the late Secretary of War, was 114,868.' And throughout our Confederacy, by the management of the same master hand there were distributed to various convenient points, 707,000 stand of arms, and 200,000 revolvers."

"That was far-sighted and statesman-like, I allow," replied Mrs. Manson.

"That it was!" said Mr. Manson. "And

the North felt the blow thus aimed at her vitals. Hear this from Floyd's successor, Cameron, under Lincoln's administration, — hear him groan : —

" 'Upon my appointment to the position, I found the department destitute of all means of defence, without guns, and with little means of purchasing the *material* of war. I found the nation without an army, and I found scarcely a man throughout the whole War Department in whom I could put my trust. The Adjutant General deserted. The Quartermaster General ran off. The Commissary General was on his death-bed. More than half the clerks were disloyal ! ' "

"Do you call it doing nothing to bring about this hubbub and distress on that fragment of a Government at the North ? "

"All that is very well," replied Mrs. Manson ; "but I complain that they've done less than they have encouraged us to expect. Washington was to have been taken long since."

"Ah, well," replied Mr. Manson, "that is in the programme. You'll wake up some morning and find it was taken while you were asleep."

"I've been looking for that," returned Mrs. Manson, "until I am heart-sick. It seems to me that our men boast over their wine, and fall short when they come to executing their threats."

"Perhaps so, sometimes; but the capture of Washington City can be easily accomplished by Virginia and Maryland; but I think, myself, there isn't a moment to lose. The whole country pants for the onset. Military companies have been drilling in Maryland and in our State for months for this very purpose; they only await the signal to burst in and overwhelm the city."

"Well," said Mrs. Manson, "just grant us ladies the liberty, and we'll give the signal, and help burn the city too. Why, Washington has more people within its walls that believe in secession than the opposite."

"I reckon it has," replied Mr. Manson, "and when two or three thousand of our Virginians planned to seize the arsenal at Harper's Ferry, supply themselves with weapons and ammunition, descend the Potomac to Washington, and make a fierce assault on the city, our sympathizers were there in strong force and well armed; but we were basely betrayed, and we've got the work to do over again, starting from some other point."

"There have been lots of reverses and disappointments for us," said Mrs. Manson. "We women fully expected that the North would have been conquered long ere this. Now it's four mortal long months since the war began, and the Yankees seem as far from being subdued as ever. And we are really suffering in our circumstances from the spoil which our leaders promised us when they returned victorious from invading the North. I've 'lotted on elegant dresses and jewelry, but I have not yet got a glimpse of them. Now I want to ask you, husband, if you don't

mean to join Jeff's army, and help on the fighting?"

"Me, wife! me! Do you realize what you ask? Why, I am, as I always have been, my own overseer; if I was to leave, the plantation would go to rack and ruin; your life would be in danger; the people would rise and murder you; I cannot think of leaving my business, and devoting you to destruction!"

"But somebody must fight," said Mrs. Manson, "if all made excuses, the Northerners would soon overcome us. I only wish I was a man, I'd be a soldier at once."

"It's easy to talk," replied Mr. Manson; "but the *doing* you'd find quite a different thing."

"But if we do not *do*, all is lost," said the wife. "I wish Frank and Hal were old enough; I'd send them into the army this very day."

"You would?" said Mr. Manson; "and if I went, what you gwine to do with yourself on the plantation? Do you dare stay here with this large force of servants around you?"

"If it isn't safe," replied Mrs. Manson, "of course I should not, for the sake of the children. I should manage to get a pass, and remove North until this war is over."

"How could you be safe there?" asked Mr. Manson.

"Oh, I should disguise myself, and do as the Northerners do, and you wouldn't know me at all, I should be so changed."

Mrs. Manson was interrupted by the entrance of the old nurse, Abby, who came to ask where were Chainy and the little boys, Hal and Frank.

"How should I know?" asked Mrs. Manson. "It's Chainy's business to entertain them, and if she is as trusty as she was recommended to be, she will bring them in safe and sound directly. Go and call her, Abby, and tell her to bring the children to me."

The servant went to do her bidding, and came back shortly to say that neither Chainy nor the children could be found.

"Bless my life, Beverly!" exclaimed Mrs.

Manson, "where can those children be? Do you suppose that Chainy is really trusty?"

"Of course she is," was the reply. "Uncle Nelson warmly recommended her as a good nurse for children, and as faithful as the day is long."

"But what has she done with Frank and Hal?" asked Mrs. Manson.

"Oh, they're safe enough, trust me for that," said Mr. Manson; "they'll be in directly;" and taking his hat he stepped out, and calling two or three of the servants to help him, commenced the search; for he was really as much startled as his wife.

An hour was spent in looking through the park, but to no avail. Mr. Manson now returned to the house and had it thoroughly searched from attic to cellar; but no Frank and Hal could be found. Mrs. Manson became much alarmed, and walked her room, wringing her hands and crying violently.

"Oh, my precious boys! Where can they be? My boys! my boys!"

Mr. Manson aroused his neighbors for miles distant, and the search was kept up all night, and for days and nights afterward, while the poor mother mourned herself sick, refusing to be comforted.

Did not conscience whisper in those sad, dreadful hours that this was but a righteous retribution? And was she not haunted with visions of weeping slave mothers, when their children were torn from them to be sold?

XIII.

IN JEFF'S ARMY.

TO return to Sam and his father. The trader had intently watched the moving scene, and now drew nearer, asking, —

"How came you to enlist, friend?"

"I didn't enlist," replied Dean. "I was walkin' 'long, a right smart piece from hum, with my budget on my back, when a man rode up with bright buttons an' shinin' shoulder-straps, an' sez he, —

"'This way, man! — this way to camp!'

"Sez I, 'What?'

"Sez he, 'If you want suthin' good to eat, this way!'

"I was right smart hungry, an' as he seemed ready to obleege me, I jest went with him. We turned off the road a leetle ways, an' there was lots of cabins made of cloth, which

they called camps. The man showed me into one of 'em, where he said were the recruits, an' said he, 'Jest make yerself to hum, for you're a soldier in Jeff's army!'

"I never was so beat in all my life! Me a soldier? I didn't know nothin' 'bout fightin'. I told him so; but he said, No matter; I could larn. Arter dinner he said he'd drill us. I didn't know what he meant; but the corn-bread an' bacon tasted right smart good for all that.

"'What's the fightin' for?' said I to the next man. 'Who you fightin' with?'

"'Whar's you raised,' said he, 'that you don't know? Why, hi! we're in fur killin' off the Yankees, an' takin' Washington, an' puttin' Jeff Davis into the White House.'

"'Oh, yes!' said I, pertending to rec'lect; but that's the fust news I had of the war.

"They gin me a gun, an' set us to walkin' up an' down, which they called marching. Everything was so new. I'd started out to look up Sam an' Lottie, an' I didn't relish

bein' turned out of my course. So one night when they put me on guard, I jist walked off; an' arter hidin' daytimes, an' travellin' nights, I got aboard a canal boat,—a trader takin' pity on me, an' brought me up here. I leetle thought I should find Sam so easy. Now, if on'y Lotty could be found, I'd be content."

"Now, dad, can't we be gwine hum?" asked Sam.

"I reckon we can," said Mr. Dean, "fur we must travel nights to git shed of the soldiers. We'll git ready an start right off!" and he turned inquiringly to the trader.

"That's it," said Kize Carter, "if you must go; but why don't you stay here an' saund for your family?—no better place to git a livin' in than this are swamp."

"Wal," said Mr. Dean, "that's jist as the woman sez,—couldn't think of sech a thing without consultin' her."

"Wal, ef ye must go," said the trader, "I reckon Cretia an' I ken fit ye off! She'll tote

ye down the canal in her boat, and ye ken git on a right smart piece afore mornin'."

The fitting off was here quite suddenly interrupted by the growling of the dog, and by the appearance of a rebel scout at the door.

"Halloa, Carter!" said he; "I've jist called to have you report yourself. What's your occupation, age, prospects?"

"Them's putty questions to put to me!" replied the swamp-merchant. "I know you, — you and I used to be old cronies; you're only a poor white, if you doos try to strut a soldier."

"I aint nuther," said the scout; "I'se one of Jeff's soldiers. I aint a poor white no more. Don't I have rations, an' wages? I'm my own man, Kize, what arns his livin', an' supports my fam'ly."

"An' do you mean to tell me," said Carter, "that you gits pay for comin' out here an' pokin' your nose intow my affairs!"

"I'se only doin' my duty, an' lookin' out for Jeff's business consarns," replied the intruder.

"Come now, Carter, own up; what's the arthly use of your livin' out here with these are mortal big skeeters, an' with them are hootin' an' screechin' owls, and the frogs tun-in' up so, an' whar the panthers cry like a child, an' the b'ars have their hums. Now, Kize, it stands to natur' that you wouldn't live out here so ef it didn't pay, somehow. Come, now, tell us. How do you do it?"

The swamp-merchant kept on smoking his pipe for a moment, then slowly rising, said, —

"It's none of your business, Jeff's boot-black!" and taking down his gun from its rack over the fireplace, he turned toward the scout, who, being a sickly, pallid, nervous man, by this time trembled like a leaf.

"What you gwine to do?" asked the scout.

"Hold on there," replied Carter, as he loaded his gun, "an' I'll show you what. I'm jist gwine to larn you to mind your own business."

"Now, Kize, don't!" pleaded the poor

white. "I'm friendly, an' only did it for fun like. Don't kill me. I don't want to spy you out. I'll tell the Secesh I couldn't find hide nor hair of ye, an' I heered you was killed last year. That's a good fellar, Kize; let me go this time, an' I'll never trouble you ag'in!"

Meanwhile the gun of the swamp-merchant was steadily pointed at the miserable creature before him, who felt that he was staring death in the face.

"I wont kill you this time," said Carter, slowly, "you is so mortal scart; but remember, if you ever interfere with my consarns ag'in, it'll be the last of your business. It's a poor story if a man what's clean gone in the galloping consumption can't foller a doctor's descriptions, an' come out intow the country to susticate, an' fat up like. It's a poor story, I reckon, if he can't do it without you miserable patrol soldiers a-doggin' his heels."

"That's so! that's so!" replied the scout, rejoiced to escape so easily. "I'll go back

to Johnson an' report you aint nowhere to be found in the land of the livin' !”

“That'll do !” replied the merchant. “Now you jist keep guard on the canal for the night, an' if some of my family takes a boat-ride, you'll let 'em pass in safety,—you understand,—and see no harm comes to 'em.”

“Yes, Kize, in course. I'll do anything reasonable to 'bleege ye.”

“You owe your life to me, you know,” said the merchant.

“Yis, I does so !” was the reply.

“Putty business, for a man to turn ag'in his own friends, jis' 'cause there's a war,” continued the merchant ; but the scout was gone.

All was bustle for an hour or two, until the three were fitted off, when the trader, shutting the door, and drawing his chair toward the fireplace, where the brands were smoking, to keep off the musquitoes, went on with his talk.

“As I was sayin’,” said he, “this are swamp is a master good place to hide in, an' git a

livin'; 'tis so! we'se all diskivered that. If only the Secesh an' the Unions would keep out of it, we pöor whites would continer to git a chance here to git our heads above water, an' breathe a bit. You slave folks comes out here an' gits free, an' as for the sojers as don't beleeve in Jeff, they has a chance, too, as you see. There's Sam's father; he got off slick; didn't he?"

The maroon was just then thinking of his mother and the sick children in the lodge, and did not answer.

"I think, myself, he better be a soldier than a poor white," Carter continued, "with nothin' to do, and nothin' to eat; but a man wants to consider a thing, an' not be forced to fight till he gits ready. But I tell you, stranger, I reckon there's no end to human nature, an' I reckon it's on the increase;" and after this sentiment, he puffed away in silence, the maroon dreamily looking in the fire.

"Master cute fellars," the trader began again, "some of these are swamp-men is, as

very probably you has the means of knowin'. Anyhow, they has wit enough to git their own livin', an' a fat one, too, an' that's more'n can be said of everybody in this are world.

"A man's to be measured by what he does, I reckon, and not by what he sez. A man may talk 'bout business all the days of his life, an yit be beholden to other folks' work for clothes an' fodder, an' what does all his talk amount to? 'Cordin' to my reck'nin', that man, if he's as rich as a king, haint got nothin' tow brag on, an' that's whar most all the Confederates is. Brag is a good dog; but Hold-on is better. He don't begin tow stand as high, in my disteem, as the slave as runs away, builds him a cabin, and gits a good free livin' in the woods. I'm bound to respect the man that snuff's up his nose at the idea of bein' bought an' sold like a hoss! He owes it to himself an' his children to 'scape if he can."

The maroon nodded assent, and the merchant continued.

“Now there’s them of your color as capable of doin’ business, an’ takin’ care of ’emselves, an’ fightin’, as any of my color. There’s no dispute ’bout that; an’ the Lord he gives ’em a chance, when he builds such places as this swamp. It’s their duty to git clar if they can, in my reckonin’. I’ll help all I can to the woods, and trade with them after they gits there, — that’s in my line, you know. An’ it’s my ’pinion they’ll git a chance to do some fightin’ on their own ’count ’fore this are war is over.”

The maroon smiled, and the trader continued, slightly changing the subject.

“Didn’t I saund that are fellar back to his regiment off the track? But you see it mout not do for me tow show my head too much down there in Norfolk, an’ how’d you reckon I works it?” and the trader puffed smoke a moment, waiting for a reply, and then said, “Wal, you see, Cretia sez to me one day, —

“‘I don’t want you to go to Norfolk no more.’ An’ sez I, ‘Why not?’ An’ sez she,

'I'm afeered they'll put you intow the jail, or make you go an' fight, an' I sha'n't see you no more.'

"'Nonsense!' sez I, 'no fears o' that. I shall go tow Norfolk when I has business thar, I reckon.'

"'Don't now, dad!' sez Cretia.

"'But,' sez I, 'what upon arth you reckon we'll live on, if I gits shed of tradin'? It'll be fried frogs all the time, an' delicade as that are livin' is, we shall git sick on't, you may depend.'

"'We shall live well nuff,' said Cretia. 'I'll use my bow and arrows more. I ken hit anything that runs or flies, an' we shall git 'long jist as well as we do now.'

"'S'pozin' we do,' said I; 'what'll our customers do as lives in the woods? What'll they do with their staves an' shingles? Who'll buy 'em, an' tote 'em back corn-beef, bacon, codfish, an' clothes? Jist tell me that, Cretia, if you ken!'

"She knowed the rest of the traders had as

much as they could do ; but Cretia aint tow be beat for expedients, an' she thought half a minute, and then sez she, 'I'll take my canoe, hide it in the alders, git a load together, an row down the canal by night. You ken tell me whar you trade, an' I ken do the business jist as well as you ken.' Wal, I seed the gal was in the right on't, so I let the critter have her own way, an' a fust-rate trader she is too. She wears varus dresses at varus times, an' don't git to look familiar, an' nobody don't 'spect her, an' them are rebel pickets from the poor whites winks an' lets her pass, bein' she's a woman. She's a right smart trader, she is, an' I alus lets the big dog go with her for comp'ny."

The trader glanced at the maroon, who was now asleep, and he suddenly bethought him that it was late, and he himself was sleepy ; so arousing his guest, he conducted him to his room, and was soon dreaming of Cretia and her passengers.

Mr. Dean and Sam reached home after

nearly a week's wandering, having often lost their way.

They came up the road in the pine wood, one evening, just as the children were driving home the goat.

"Why, hi!" exclaimed Tomtit, "there's our Sam, an dad too!" and then there was such a scampering, a halloaing and screaming as made Mr. Dean feel quite young again, and brought Mrs. Dean out of the door to see what was the matter.

"Halloa, marm!" shouted Sam, darting away from a group of four, who were clinging to him for joy.

"Why, Sammy! Sammy!" cried Mrs. Dean, kissing him, and wiping her tears with the corner of her apron, and then turned to welcome her husband. Goaty looked very knowing, and brushed up against the newcomers, pet fashion, as if to attract her share of attention.

It was a happy family, that night, that gathered around the table, spread with plenty

of ash pone and buttermilk; the only drawback was, Where can Lottie be? After supper Mrs. Dean called the family to prayers, saying, —

“God will hear, and send us Lottie!”

XIV.

WHAT BEFELL THE DAISY.

BUT where is Lottie; meanwhile?

The brave girl made good progress the morning on which she set out, issuing from the ten-mile wood about eleven o'clock. She had followed the sandy cart-path which led through it, and the pine barrens, being almost destitute of underwood and flowers, had great monotony. Mile after mile, it was the same dull level. When she reached the open country, the sun poured down its furnace heat, and her feet were sore with the hot sand. Lottie thought nothing of this, however; but she looked attentively on each side of the road, and often stopped to call, hoping to find her brother, her mother's idea that he would try to escape, and perhaps be wounded and left for dead in the attempt, fully possessing her mind.

"Oh how I wish I could find him!" she sighed. "If there was only a breath of life in him, I'd git a wagoner to tote him hum, an' he'd git well, I make sure!"

Stopping to bathe her feet in a run of water that crossed the road, she found them blistered, but still she kept on.

A little after noon she was overtaken by a slave, named Ben, with a load of wood, drawn by mules.

"Why, he!" said he, "who's runnin' off now?"

Lottie looked up in surprise, and Ben, a bright-looking, good-natured negro of twenty, added, "I begs yer pardon, Miss, you kep' yer head down, an' I said to myse'f, 'pears like dish sher is some poor slave-woman, an' I'll jest give her a lift an' let her ride a piece; but as you is a poor white, you is jist as welcome to a seat in my wagon."

Lottie wondered how he knew she was a poor white, for she thought herself nicely dressed; having seen nothing of the world, she

was puzzled to account for the discovery of her parentage.

"I made sure," said she to herself, "I'd be taken for a born lady. Didn't my own mother say I looked putty as a daisy?—an' sure she ought to know!" but Lottie was too weary to be fastidious, and gladly took a seat beside slave Ben, on the small load of wood. It was noon, she was tired and hungry, and worst of all, she had found no trace of Sam. Ben whistled and sung as his mules plodded on, seemingly forgetting Lottie's presence.

"How fur you gwine?" at length he asked.

"I'm gwine till I finds my brother Sam," replied Lottie.

"Where does he live?" inquired Ben.

"I dun know; we 'spect he's toted off by de nigger-buyer."

"You does!" said Ben, feelingly, "dat's bad case — bery bad. How you gwine to git him back?"

"I dun know; I pray the Lord tow help me. Sam'll fight an' run away, afore he'll be a slave,

an' I reckon I'll meet him on the road somewheres ; p'r'aps he'll be cut up an' sick, an' he'll need me to take care of him."

"How's you gwine to catch him? The slave-buyer drive right smart fast."

"I dun know ; I'll do all I ken," replied Lottie, sadly.

"You know which way the dealer went?" asked Ben.

"He ask the way to Turner's Cross Roads ; I 'spect he go South," said Lottie.

"Dat's probable," said Ben. "He'll stop to Washington Court House, where dere am a jail ; dey puts de slaves in dere."

"How fur is that from here?"

"Right smart of a journey," replied Ben ; "take you a week to go dere if you walks rapid."

"It will?" asked Lottie, in dismay.

"Dat it will ; but I'll whip up my mules, an' tote you right smart of a piece of the way. Massa he wont know, 'cause, ye see, he gone to de war."

"The war!" asked Lottie, "where's that?"

"Why, hi! don't you know? Where you been livin', you no har de news?" said Ben, compassionating her ignorance. "De war's been ragin' dese four months ever since de 'federates tried to take Fort Sumter last April. You heered of dat, I reckon."

"No, I haint heered nothin'," replied Lottie; "but what'll the war do? Will it hurt Sam?"

"Dun know; nobody dun know what's gwine to come ob dish sher war. Some ob de colored preachers say 'taint de massa's war, 'taint de Yankee's war, but de Lord's war; an' he's gwine to make de crooked ways strait, an' p'r'aps, when it over, all de slaves be free! Who knows? Dat's what de prayin' ones has been prayin' for."

"I've heard my mother say she reckoned the Lord he'd hear their prayers sometime," said Lottie; "but I didn't reckon it would be quite so soon. Has your master gone to the war?"

"Dat he has! Why, hi! he's the colonel of

a regiment. Col. William King is my massa. You heard 'of the King family"—

"No," replied Lottie, "I reckon not."

"Where in de land you raised dat you neber har ob dat family — fustest in de State of Caroliny?"

"How you git 'long without your master?" asked Lottie, changing the subject.

"Right smart jolly — good times — missus she do her bes' to keep us strait; but I takes some little rides an' journeys on my own 'count. I shall tote you right smart of a piece dis arternoon, hoop ho!" and he stopped his team and unloaded his wood. "De mules dat durable dey neber mind totin' you a piece. I reckon you wont find Sam, right smart rapid; but if you'se bound tow go arter him, I'se bound tow tote you on a piece; dat's doin' as I'd be done by, an' preacher Bill says dat is a part ob religion. Nobody can't git to heaven dat don't do dat."

"I reckon you is right," said Lottie, undoing her bundle of brogans and pone.

"Nuffin' better dan pone to eat?" exclaimed the wagoner, with great disgust. "Why, hi! let me help you to my snack!" and Ben took from his dinner-basket pieces of cold turkey, omelet and plum-pudding.

Lottie was too urprised to speak, but looked at Ben as much as to say, "Where did you get all this?"

"Here is what the cook give me — it's lef' of missus' dinner yesterday. Massa he done gone, and dere aint so much comp'ny at the house as dere was, an' dere's more food for de house servants. Cook William is a friend of mine, an' he 'members me arter dinner."

Lottie ate a little of each kind that was placed before her; but it was little that she could eat, so different was it from her accustomed food. Ben urged on his team, that he might make the greatest distance possible that day. His aim was to reach a landing on the Black Water River, a branch of the Chowan, that Lottie might take the steamer down to Winton, some forty miles distant.

Once, as they neared a rebel camp, one of the pickets challenged him.

"Who are you, and where are you bound?"

Ben was ready. "Dish sher young lady, a Maravian, an' kin to massa's family. I jist totin' her on her way a piece to her school. She's the 'markablist teacher."

The picket was satisfied, for the Moravian sisters of North Carolina are in high repute, and pride themselves on plain dress.

Ben now began to prepare Lottie's mind for a ride in a steamboat. She could not be made to realize much about it, and would rather have gone on afoot.

"But you must move rapid," said Ben. "If you gits to Washington before the slave-dealer with his gang, you can look around and see Sam when he comes, an' p'r'aps git a chance to sly him off when de buyer don't see ye."

Puff, puff, snort, snort,—quite a fuss the steamer "Fox" made letting off steam as she prepared to start on her accustomed run down

the Black Water River — a deep, narrow, winding stream — through a region of swamps.

"What is that dreadful noise?" asked Lottie, in alarm.

"Oh," replied Ben, laughing, "don't you know? Why, that's the little 'Fox'!"

"The *little* fox!" exclaimed Lottie. "I should think it was a right smart big fox, to make such a noise as that."

Ben could not repress his mirth, and snort, snort, puff, puff, whif, whif, went the steamer.

"It must be as big as an ox," continued Lottie, her eyes large with wonder and alarm; "an' I'm afeard it will eat us up."

"No danger," replied Ben; "it's the best-natured fox you ever see, jist as tame as a cat, an' it'll let you ride on its back."

"Oh, I shouldn't dare to do it."

"He, he! ha, ha! yes, you will, an' you must, too, for it's the only way you ken git down the river."

"I ken go afoot," said Lottie, shuddering at the new dangers of the way.

"Why, hi! ken you wade?" asked Ben.
"This are river's right smart deep."

"I'll go round it, then," said Lottie.

"That's umpossible," replied Ben, "these are swamps is dat sloppy; you'd git mired, an' that'd be the last of you, — no gittin' you out, you see."

"What ken I do?" asked Lottie, in real trouble.

"Git aboard of the little 'Fox,'" replied Ben; "there she is;" and at this instant they came in sight of the spruce steamer. Lottie's surprise was as great as that of the Indians of Hispaniola, when they beheld the ships of Columbus, thinking them birds of heaven, with large flapping wings. This fox was the strangest animal in her eyes. Where did it come from? Who found it? What an odd-shaped thing!

These and other like thoughts passed through the young girl's mind, as Ben turned his mules' heads to a halter-post to fasten them, for they, too, did not quite approve of

so much noise from the little "Fox." The faithful wagoner then guided her to the plank which stretched from the boat to the wharf, and saying a good word for her to the stewardess, a fat negress named Susan, Lottie found herself ushered into the snug cabin, in the stomach of the little fox. She thought of Jonah in the whale's belly,—for her mother knew the story,—and wondered if she would be in danger of being thrown up in like manner. Turning to ask Ben, he was gone.

Lottie was really frightened at this, for now the boat with an unearthly scream, or shrieking whistle, as if uniting all hideous sounds, rounded out into the river. She felt the motion; she was being carried off by a dreadful wild beast, called a fox. Starting up, she gave a cry of distress, and tried to force her way up the stairs; but fat Susan, who made them her throne, was quite too much for her.

"Why, hi! you mus' be drunk;" said she, "what you gwine to do?"

"Oh, let me get out! let me get out!" cried Lottie.

"Hush, honey!" replied Susan, soothingly; "we're gwine down the river a piece to Winton, then you shall git out, for 'pears like you can't pay your fare further than that. The wagoner gin me the pay for Winton, an' that's all the change he had."

"Did?" asked Lottie; "an' you isn't afeard?"

"Why, hi!" laughed Susan, "I'se been down the river over an' often, and no harm haint come to me yit; an' 'pears like there wont no harm come to such a lamb as you is."

Lottie's face brightened. Thus far she had found friends, and she remembered that her mother was praying for her and took comfort in the thought. She had sunk down on the lowest stair, at the stewardess's feet, and, getting reassured, began to look around the cabin. All at once she was startled at seeing the head and shoulders of a strange-looking

girl, wearing a shaker bonnet just like her own, and exclaimed, —

“Who is it? Who is that gal cut off in the wall?”

“The land!” cried Susan, “didn’t you never see a lookin’-glass afore? It’s yerself that you see in there.”

“Is?” said Lottie, cautiously getting up and examining it, with all the curiosity of a little child.

“Why, hi! where was you raised, that you didn’t never see a lookin’-glass? Dis comes of bein’ a poor white. ’Pears like they neber detain to lookin’-glasses! If they knew how they looks, they’d scrub up, I reckon.”

Lottie was grieved at this speech, and could not reconcile it with her good mother’s decision, that she looked like a daisy; and kind-hearted Susan added,—

“Neber mind, you aint like de res’ of them trash; you is a Moravin, ’pears like,” and a merry twinkle lit up the eyes of the stewardess.

Lottie did not notice it, for just then her thoughts had wandered to Sam, and she was thinking, "Oh, where can he be? When shall I find him?" Her anxiety was diverted, however, as she glanced at her brogans, which, at Ben's suggestion, she had put on in the wagon; they were admirable in her eyes, as she sat there at Susan's feet and whiled the time until the bell rung, and the steam screamed for a landing.

"'Pears like we'se 'rived," said Susan; "disher river is de Chowan, an' de place is Winton. Now, honey, de res' ob de passengers is bound to take care ob demselves like, an' I'll see to you. Come right arter me up de stars; de little 'Fox' stops here fifteen minutes to take his snack."

Lottie stared, and Susan added with a lively laugh,—

"That means to take in wood and water. Come right over the plank; wait a bit, though, I mus' put you up a snack," and going to the storeroom, she returned with a

parcel of food, and the two, following other passengers, stepped on shore.

"I'se gwine to 'treduce you to Mrs. Spiney, de lan'lady dat keeps de hotel through de trees yonder. I shall call you de Moravin teacher, as Ben did, an' you mus'n't talk much; 'pears like you is de likeness of de teacher when you is silent."

Lottie said nothing, because she did not know what to say, and wondering how she should get along, feeling awkward and bashful, walked by Susan's side the few rods which brought them to the small two-story house, dignified with the name of hotel.

"Dish sher de Moravin teacher," said Susan, aside to Mrs. Spiney; "she's got larnin'. She wants a room, an' don't want to be disturbed like, till morning."

"Very well," replied the bustling landlady.

"Can you saund her on to Washington tomorrow?" asked Susan.

"My carriage runs twenty miles in that direction," replied Mrs. Spiney.

“Will you give her lodgin’, breakfast, and saund her the twenty miles and charge it to my account?” said Susan.

“Yes, indeed!” replied the landlady. “I have not forgotten that your money gave me a lift when I was in trouble; I will gladly make the turn.”

“Let me show the young lady to her room,” said Susan, diplomatically.

“Certainly,” replied the hostess,—“No. 4, at the head of the stairs;” and without further ceremony Lottie was ushered out of sight of curious eyes.

“Dere, honey, I’sè done de bes’ I could wid ye. Your lodgin’, breakfas’, and ride twenty miles to-morrow is all paid for. Eat your snack, an’ go to bed, an’ don’t talk much when you go down to breakfas’ in the mornin’. If dey should ’spect you was a poor white, dey woulnd’t give you good treatment. God bless ye, honey, good-by;” and kind Susan vanished down the stairway, having shut the door as she went out.

The chamber was low and plainly furnished ; but Lottie was dazzled with its comparative elegance. Nevertheless, she longed to be safely back in her mother's cabin, fully realizing the sentiment which she had never heard expressed in words : —

“ Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.”

The carpet, mirror, wash-stand, chairs, and bedstead, although ordinary, could not be sufficiently admired, and the setting sun found her busy with thoughts of wonder. By and by, she bethought her of her supper, which Susan had so carefully provided, and taking off her shaker, spread her food on a corner of the wash-stand, and ate with a thankful heart. She felt that God had answered her mother's prayers, and borne her prosperously on her journey. That night she dreamed of home,—dreamed that she found Sam, and that they were all safe in the dear old cabin once more.

She passed safely through the perils of breakfast, although her hostess and the ser-



LOTTIE ASLEEP IN THE WOODS. Page 187.

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vants thought her very odd, and about noon the next day she was put down at Windsor, some forty miles from Washington, N. C. This remaining distance she must perform on foot. But so wonderfully had she been helped on her way thus far, that she was full of hope and courage, and started on at a brisk step. The influence of her dream still shone on her mind with a cheering ray, and she was sanguine that she should find her brother, the next day at farthest. Hope really was bearing her upon his wings, and she felt no fatigue. Large plantations and stretches of pine woods intervened between the towns and villages in this part of the State. The sandy roads were heated by the burning sun until walking was almost unendurable. Lottie's blistered feet aroused her from reverie, and she sought shelter in the shade of a grove by the wayside, making a seat of a prostrate tree, and burying her feet in cooling moss. Despite the mosquitoes, which came in clouds, at length she fell asleep, and remained thus un-

conscious, leaning against the boughs, until she was startled by the shrill notes of the whippoorwill. Looking around, she almost uttered a cry of fear, as she saw it was dark.

"Whippoorwill! Whippoorwill!" sung the bird, without the least regard to Lottie's superstitious dread of his ghostly song.

"Oh, if it was only light," thought Lottie, "how I should like to hear the bird sing; but it is so frightful now." Looking around, she strained her eyes to catch sight of the sad singer, but in vain; he was nowhere to be seen, but still he kept on,—“Whippoorwill! Whippoorwill!” The moon was shedding its pale ray, and everything looked lonesome and stealthy. Lottie thought she would rather have it quite dark than such a half-glare of silver; the soft glances of the moon were to her like the whispers of ghosts.

Presently in the distance was heard an answering call, “Whippoorwill, whippoorwill,” and greatly to the relief of the benighted girl, the nearer minstrel removed.

Poor Lottie ! where could she go for shelter ? She did not dare attempt to travel in the night, and she was almost equally afraid to remain where she was. At length, climbing a white-pine, with wide-spreading boughs, she found a resting-place a few feet from the ground. A little brown wren, dreaming of crumbs, grubs, and nest-building, had its slumbers disturbed, and with hasty flight alighted on a near branch, and as Lottie became quiet, the bird, folding its head under its wing, went to sleep again ; and, despite her fears, the young girl, too, was soon in forgetfulness. Dream on, unsheltered sleepers, the Eye that never slumbers is on you both ; dream on.

XV.

LOTTIE MEETS WITH THIEVES.

WASHINGTON, at the head of the broad waters of the Pamlico River, was all astir, one sultry morning, as the cannon of Flag-Officer Stringham's fleet came booming over the Sound. The town contained four or five thousand inhabitants, and had some commerce of its own, exporting staves and shingles, the produce of its neighboring swamps.

"Dish sher town am gwine to be taken dish time, for sartin," said old Isaac, as he unloaded staves from his wagon, for a schooner at the landing.

"Hut tut, don't you believe that!" said Prissy, the genteel Creole laundress, — a free woman, — with a basket of clean linen on her head, on her way to a vessel. "The Yankees

too good friends for that! They only firing in the fog, like."

"If de Yankees takes de town, your trade down, dat sartin," replied Isaac.

"Father's life! don't talk! My trade jist begun, when that happen! As long as there is dirt in the world, Prissy will have something to do! If the Yankees gits into town, all smooched with powder and smoke, 'pears like I have some washing on hand,— he! he!"

"Whose washing you got there?" asked Isaac.

"Oh, this is for the men on that vessel," replied Prissy; "they came near being shipwrecked off the cape, an' they put in here for repairs, an' them that wants washing done as it should be, and not *stave-paddled*, comes to me!" and with her own stately step, crowned with the basket, she marched down the wharf to the vessel.

This stave-paddling, or pounding of clothes, was much practised by a class of negroes, at

Washington, too indolent to rub them properly. Sitting on the bank of the river, they laid the garments to be washed on the shelving rocks, and with a stave, leisurely beat them as the water rippled by. This miserable pretence for washing was justly censured by Prissy.

Washington was a county town; hence it boasted a courthouse and a jail, and just as Prissy was returning from the vessel, with the bright silver in her pocket, and a basket of soiled clothes on her head, she saw a crowd gathering on the street on which her house was situated, talking in excited tones. Having put the basket within her door, she returned to ascertain the cause of the commotion.

"Curus gal, I reckon," said an overseer.

"What's the row? What is it?" asked voices in the crowd.

"Why," replied a planter, "a girl has strayed into town that can't give no reasonable account of herself. She wants to find

her brother, who, I reckon, has 'listed or been drafted. Some runaway's story, I reckon."

"Nigger's news!" added an overseer.

"She aint a nigger," said Mrs. Jack Conway, the jailer's wife, standing on her doorstep; "the girl is as white as I be!"

"That may be," replied a fat judge, "we have white niggers as well as black ones. If she is *at all suspected*, we must commit her to jail until the true case appears."

"That 'gal a nigger!" exclaimed Prissy, who, being a privileged member of community, spoke her mind on all occasions, "she's only a poor white!"

"I reckon Prissy is more than half right," said the judge; "nevertheless, the jail is the place for her!"

And so the crowd escorted poor Lottie—for it was herself—to that foul receptacle of criminals and slaves. Not one word of pity was spoken; no one interfered to prevent this barbarous treatment, although a tutor from the

North and the minister of the parish were witnesses of this outrage on the defenceless stranger. She had literally fallen among thieves, and the priest and the Levite passed by on the other side.

Poor girl! sorely was her faith tried, as after two days' wearisome walking, and two lonesome nights in the woods, she found the hospitality of a loathsome cell, being spurned from the comfortable homes around her because she was a stranger in distress. Too much exhausted to stand, she sank down on the mouldy straw in the corner, the picture of wretchedness and despair. How desirable seemed the Piny Wood cottage compared with the jail! How happy the home circle before Sam was carried off! Oh, when would they meet together again; when would her troubles be over? And overcome with a sense of her misery, Lottie cried herself to sleep, leaning against the cold stone wall.

In a corner room of an upper story sat Jailer Conway and his wife. He was short

and thin, and his wife disproportionately tall and portly, and as masculine as he was feminine.

Mrs. Conway sat swaying in her arm-chair, regaling herself with "dipping," or rubbing her teeth with snuff.

"It's awful chilly to-night, Jack," — the name she gave her husband, — "stir the fire; can't ye!" And Jack stirred the fire.

"Why don't you ring fur Sal to wait and tend?" meekly asked he, after a brief space.

"Why don't I?" exclaimed the wife; "that's my business! If I help you, it's as little as you can do to help me. There never is a row in the jail, but my fist and my arm has to settle it, and I'm more jailer than you be, by half, Jack Conway. I have all the powerful niggers to lock up, an' you know that, Jack!"

"Wal, I reckons you is, Miss Conway," replied the husband, "an' I'll tell ye what I'll do. I'll stir the fire, an' do all the waitin' an' tendin' you wants, if you'll on'y let Sal make that new gal below a bit of broth. The poor thing

is half starved. I'se mortal afeard she'll die, an' I shall have another dead body to tote out, an' you knows, Miss Conway, that saunds sich an awful death feelin' to my stomach, it lays me up right smart long time." And he vigorously poked the fire, and piled on fuel.

"The land!" exclaimed Mrs. Conway, "she'll do well 'nough. She's used to it; tough as a knot; couldn't kill her if you should try. Hogs' swill is good 'nough for her. Jist tote down the pail, and let her skim out what she wants, with her fingers."

So the jailer, having lighted his lantern, took down his bunch of keys, and adroitly seizing a mince turnover from the half-open cupboard door, went out for the swill-pail, which, "for the sake of a quiet life," he bore to the door of the miserable cell which Lottie occupied.

"Poor child!" thought the jailer, "I haven't the heart to wake her up to her troubles. I'll see if I can't make her a comfortable bed;" and returning up the stairs, he brought down

a husk mattress from a room adjoining his own, and placing it in the driest corner of the cell, he gently awoke her, and removed her to it; then giving her the turnover and a mug of water, without saying a word, he turned the key and took his swill-pail away, not deeming it worth while to give his prisoner a glance at its contents.

"Did you take down the swill-pail!" asked Mrs. Conway, as he passed the door.

"Yes, indeed, I did!" replied the jailer.

"Did you give the gal suthin' to eat?"

"That I did, Miss Conway!" was the ready reply.

"Wal," returned the wife, "it's my mind she's in for good. She's a slave an' no mistake 'bout that. She'll have to be sold to pay her jail fees, I reckon!"

XVI.

SORROW IN THE LODGE.

AFTER the maroon and Sam left the lodge, the little sufferers, Hal and Frank, grew rapidly worse. They were covered from head to foot with an itching, burning blotch, which gave them no rest, and tortured beyond endurance, their screams were most heart-rending. Chainy taking the younger in her arms walked to and fro and sung a soothing lullaby; but to no purpose.

"Poor little thing! Precious infant baby, what Aunt Chainy do? What Aunt Chainy do?" she cried. Rafe, meanwhile, bent over Frank, vainly trying to divert him from his sufferings. At length, Chainy finding that all her efforts failed to relieve the children, laid Hal on the couch and sat beside them and wept bitterly. Rafe's tears came, too, when he

saw Aunt Chainy crying. Baby Frank changed fast. The fever raged violently, and the poison had made him so swollen that he was now entirely blind and delirious. Chainy feared that he would live but a little while, and therefore aroused herself to alleviate his condition if possible. The maple guelder rose, or Indian dockmackie, grew near the lodge, and pointing it out to Rafe, he brought some leaves, and the good woman put them on Frank's hands and limbs and feet, and gently laying him in Rafe's arms, charged him to bear him to and fro in the lodge, while she attended to Hal.

Although Frank's sufferings were in some measure lessened, his disease was not arrested by the application. He moaned constantly and failed apace. Oh, it was heart-rending to think that he must die so far from home, in the lone, dark swamp! But yet he had the loving Chainy to soothe and tend him; he was not utterly forsaken. Not half so desolate and stricken as the little children whom sla-

very has for ages dragged from their homes and sent off to the rice-swamps and cotton-fields, to bleed under the lash, or die with the fever, far away from a mother's care and love.

"What poor ole Chainy do widout her darlin' Frank?" cried she, as the tears flowed from her dim eyes. Again she took the babe in her arms, pressed him to her heart, and wept and prayed over him; but his hour had come, — the dreadful hour of death. The moments of anguish that seemed so long, so unsupportable, at length were over, and the child's spirit fled. There was a sweet smile of peace on the so lately distorted face of the infant, and Chainy murmured, "He's jis' gone to glory, blessed baby! He's jis' gone to glory! He'll have no more strouble now;" and she ceased her tears, as if her own worn spirit sympathized in the release of the child.

There was no sound in the lodge, save the heavy breathing of Hal, in the stupefaction of the fever, and gently laying the dead child on the foot of the couch, Chainy sat down and

watched the two in silence. It was getting late in the afternoon; she knew that the swamp-man, her Trolo, could not reach home until the next day, and yet she looked out the door so longingly, hoping God would send help for dear little Hal. That was a lone, sad night. Rafe thought he could sit up and help Aunt Chainy take care of Hal, but early in the evening, overcome with grief and weariness, he fell asleep, and sank down on a pile of skins.

"Poor t'ing!" pitifully said Chainy; "it's good that you can sleep. You needs it, dat you does!"

Clouds of mosquitoes came in, and it required constant effort to keep them off herself and the child. As soon as it was morning, Rafe awoke, and Chainy, beckoning to him, tottered out the door, and taking her way down the winding path that led to the spring, on the declivity of the slope, told him that they must dig a grave in the sand. There, under the willow that partly overhung the mossy channel of the brook, they made the

babe's last resting-place. Chainy went in to watch by Hal, after she had showed Rafe how to line the grave with soft mosses, leaves, and flowers. Then wrapping the dead child in a deer-skin shroud, together they went out, Chainy bearing him, and gently laying him down in his lowly bed. And as they carefully covered the body, and turfed over the grave, Chainy said, as her tears fell afresh, "De chile is wanderin' by de river of life, and 'pears like his body will find good res' by dish sher cl'ar water."

It was slight breakfast that Chainy and Rafe could eat that morning. The good woman wept little; but the new grief revived the freshness of the old, and, added to her crushing life-trials, made a load too great for her to bear. Prostrated with her burden of sorrow, she sunk helpless on the side of the couch, where lay little Hal. Rafe was now sole nurse, and arousing his faculties to the utmost, was constantly busy, striving to do something to relieve the sufferers. He brought

cool water from the spring, tenderly raised Hal's head, bathed his burning brow, and bound cooling leaves on his hot feet; but for poor Aunt Chainy, so infirm and exhausted, he knew not what to do, only to bathe her forehead as he did those in the fever, and put water to her lips, which she could not taste.

Little Hal awaking, called piteously for Aunt Chainy to tote him in her arms.

Rafe took him up, carried him to and fro, and spoke comforting words to him.

"Where's Aunt Chainy, that she don't tote me?" feebly asked the child.

"Aunt Chainy all sick," replied Rafe.

"I wish Aunt Chainy'd tote me," moaned he.

"Dere, dere," said Rafe, "never mind, I'll tote you, an' take right smart good care on you;" and in his sweet way, he sung softly and plaintively to the sick boy, and soothed him to rest; then laying him down on the couch, he noticed that Chainy seemed to be in a sound sleep.

"Dat's good!" thought Rafe; "she'll git better. How I wish de hunter was back!" and leaving him at his lonely watch, let us follow the maroon.

XVII.

ADVENTURES OF THE SWAMP-MAN.

WITH the earliest dawn the maroon left the trader's cabin for the dwelling of the medicine-man of Cedar Ridge, — the pressing errand on which he came haunting him, and causing him to speed on his way. He had accomplished nearly half of the distance, and the sun was breaking through the clouds, when he heard voices, and a clash of arms, as of men in strife. Springing into a high tree, he became witness of the exciting scene. Three rebels were pursuing a third soldier, — no other than Will Forbes, — who was being succored by two armed contrabands. The soldiers had disarmed and bound Forbes, and were bearing him off, when the contrabands issued from the thickets, and falling upon the rebels, forced them to yield their prey.

"Blazes!" cried one of the rebels, attempting to knock down a black with the butt end of his musket. "What you here for, Joe? Back to your work, or I'll shoot you!" and he began to load again.

Just then the gun of the maroon was levelled at the speaker. A flash, a report, and the master fell, exclaiming, —

"I'm killed! I'm killed! Lucifer, what shall I do? Friends, take me home, an' kill them runaways."

His companions raised him in their arms and bore him from the field, and one of the number, lingering behind to shoot Joe, was another mark for the maroon's unerring aim. The first rebel was not so badly injured as he in his terror had supposed. The two were simply disabled, and prevented from doing further mischief.

The last wounded was a poor white, and as the swamp-man descended from the tree and saw his pitiable condition, his sympathies were stirred.

"You done shot me!" said the writhing creature, turning and looking reproachfully at the maroon.

"You was in bad company," was the reply, "an' you was gwine to shoot one of my kin."

"Oh! oh!" groaned the poor white, "what shall I do? You done broke my leg!"

But his adversary seemed not to heed. He was at that instant listening to Will Forbes's account of the combat, whom, meanwhile, he unbound. The two had often met before, and were old friends. Indeed, Forbes was indebted to the maroon for many a kindness. When Will Forbes and his family were sick, he had almost supported them, bringing them game for food, and skins for clothing. Besides, Forbes gathered from him glimpses of light on the war and its causes, which went far toward disenthraling him from the perverted views of most of the poor whites, who, through ignorance, were made the willing tools of the wealthy, designing planters.

"Is you hurt?" asked the swamp-man.

"No," replied Forbes, "nothing much, only scarred with the cord; but I'm mighty glad to git free. Let me see if my despatches is safe!" and pulling off one of his brogans, which had numerous breathing holes, he drew out a wad of papers. "All right!" he added; "them's very important. Sich little papers as them is turns the course of armies sometimes. Never seed the beat on't!"

Forbes could not read or write, and he looked upon the effect of those, to him, mysterious arts as little less than magical, regarding them with something of the superstition of the Indian.

Meanwhile the contrabands — two men and several women and children — emerged from the underbrush, whither they had betaken themselves on the alarm that they were pursued. The men had left their helpless charge to succor Forbes, and seeing the swamp-man, had stepped into the thicket again to quiet the fears of the little group therein hidden.

"Where you travelling, friends?" asked the maroon.

"We'se jist gwine to find a safe place to live in till de war is over," said one of the fugitives.

"Plenty of room out here," replied the swamp-man, as he noticed the wounded man, and with the skill of a surgeon began to examine the broken limb.

"Bredren," said he to the colored men, "we must make a litter, and help this man to a shelter."

"Dish sher chile can't do dat!" said Joe; "he'd done shot me, if you hadn't been in de tree. 'Sides, he nuffin' but a poor white. Don't 'prove of dat are trash."

"There's poor whites jist as good as other folks," replied the maroon; "but they fights ag'in themselves like, when they jines the secesh. If the secesh succeeds, they'll make lots more slaves, an' if they don't find plenty of black ones, they'll slave the whites as can't help themselves."

"Luk a here!" interrupted Joe, angrily; "dish sher chap got sarved jist as he was gwine to sarve me, an' I'se glad he is; an' how's dis chile to help him out of his strouble?"

"Joe! Joe!" interrposed an old grandmother in the group of women, "we ken 'ford to help him jist as well as not. Hasn't de good Lord begun to hear our prayers, an' deliver us? An' if we wasn't slaves, wouldn't de poor whites have a chance to do suffin' for demselves? I tell you de good Lord he's begun to help us, an' he wont leave his work till it's well done, dat he wont. We can 'ford to show marcy on dish poor white when de good Lord he's showin' sech pity for us!"

"That's so!" added the maroon.

"I reckon I'll help make a litter," said Joe, relenting, and in a short time the negroes had made a good stretcher, on which they gently laid the captive rebel, and the procession commenced moving. First the maroon showed the way, then the two men bearing

the prisoner, thirdly, the women and children, and last of all, Will Forbes brought up the rear, the swamp-man having offered to guide the little party to a place of safety, which chanced to be in the direction of Forbes's route. They passed on in silence, for some time, fearing that they might be pursued by soldiers. When they came to a part of the swamp which spread out into a ridge, or table-land, thickly covered with forest trees, they made a halt, while the maroon reconnoitred to find the best point for entrance; for so rank and close was the undergrowth, that not a vestige of a path was to be seen; indeed, there were no avenues by which the inaccessible wood could be penetrated, and yet it was the purpose of the maroon to take his company into the very heart of this fastness.

With the aid of Will Forbes pressing back the thick boughs of a clump of evergreens, on the borders of the forest, he found an open space large enough to put down the stretcher; then returning to the company left

outside, the maroon and Will parted the branches on the other side of the tree, and admitted the contrabands one by one, so that all were, for the time, in a hiding-place. Little seemed to be gained, however, and Will and his companions were wondering what they could do there, when the maroon, charging them to keep perfectly still and wait till his return, urged his way through a thicket and began climbing a spreading tree. When a few feet from the ground, a horizontal branch interlaced with another tree; the limbs had been ingeniously formed into a passage from trunk to trunk. Below was a jungle of bushes, above, shadowing foliage. The swamp-man pursued this path for several rods, and then, clambering down the last tree in the chain, landed in a wide clearing. Giving a peculiar signal-whistle, it was answered by an old man's coming out of a cabin on the edge of the wood which was covered with wild vines. In different directions around the circle, cautiously peered dusky faces, and yet a

stranger might have been set down there and have gone away none the wiser, unless, indeed, the settlers had unloosed their dogs upon him. This was the medicine-man's hamlet, and the cleared ground was the garden-patch, devoted to sweet potatoes.

The maroon was cordially received by the old man, and lost no time in making known his errand, and all under his care were welcomed.

"Dere's room 'nough," said the patriarch, "If de Lord saunds our brethren here, it's as little as we can do to welcome 'em!"

The maroon inquired if the village was well supplied with food, and found that they had an abundance. Every night some two or three of the able-bodied men were out gathering supplies, by taking staves and shingles down to the canal, to the swamp-merchants, and exchanging them for coarse clothes, salted meat, and fish. These frequent journeys were necessary, as the difficulty of traversing the swamp, and their mode of leaving and enter-

ing the forest, made it impossible to carry large loads.

As the wounded man and the fugitives were lowered, one by one, down the tree, there were plenty of kind hands ready to aid them the moment they reached the ground.

There was even a strife among the villagers as to who would show them most attention. The only hesitation was in regard to the disabled white. Some feared that he might betray them on his recovery; but a word from the maroon satisfied them, and he was entertained at the house of the medicine-man.

Will Forbes did not stop to make a call at the village. The broken limb of the poor white was set as soon as he could endure, after his toilsome ride up and down the trees. When he was borne into the cabin he had fainted. Restoratives were used, and he soon came to.

Having seen the different members of his company well cared for, the maroon made known the case of the children in the lodge,

and obtaining the medicine, left immediately on his return home.

Will Forbes soon after started in the opposite direction; the welfare of contrabands was one of the duties of his commission. This class of the South, liberated by the customs of war, and afterward more fully by the proclamation of the President, were getting too numerous for comfort, in the vicinity of the Federal camps, and certain officers and soldiers were so hard as to wish them remanded to slavery again. Government could not support them in idleness, it was urged; besides, there was no one appointed to set them to work, and little that they could do if there was. Why, they could not take care of themselves,—they, who all their lives long had been accustomed to take care of their masters!

Some of these contrabands thus kindly welcomed were the wives and children of slaves who, having learnt the art of war, on the rebel batteries at Yorktown, had sent them to the

fastness of the swamp for safety, as they themselves purposed joining the Northern army the first opportunity.

They finally escaped, and offered themselves to the Union forces at Fortress Monroe. Gen. Butler accepted them, and when Flag-Officer Stringham fitted out an expedition against Forts Clark and Hatteras, at Hatteras Inlet, Gen. Butler, having command of the land forces, took these contraband soldiers with him. Few of our generals would, at that early period, have allowed them this privilege, but would have driven them out of our lines; or, with ready subserviency, have delivered them to our enemies, their former masters. At the reduction of Forts Clark and Hatteras, was the first instance, in this war, where the white and the black man "stood side by side fighting for the Union." It is worthy of note, that the smile of God seemed to rest upon this expedition. The victory was complete and glorious, and not a drop of blood was spilt on the Federal side.

The testimony of an eye-witness is that the negro soldiers fought energetically and bravely, "none more so." Were not their souls fired with a lofty ardor, as they thought of the mighty work they were aiding, — even the deliverance of their race from bondage?

XVIII.

PRISSY'S SPECULATION.

POTTIE ate her supper in the dark, with mingled feelings. She was glad to find refuge, even in the foul jail, from the gaping, unsympathizing crowd; was thankful that matters were no worse; and that she had a husk-bed to rest upon instead of the filthy litter in the corner. The religious teachings of her poor dear mother came vividly to mind, and it was a great comfort to her to think that God could hear and answer her prayers, uttered down in that prison, just as well as if she were under the open sky.

"Mother told me to pray if I got into trouble, and so I will," thought she; "I will keep praying. Everything's for the best, mother says; but I wonder what good'll come of my being shet up here? Perhaps Sam's here in

some of these little cellars, an' I shall find him, an' we'll git cl'ar together!" and with these reveries, after having prayed once more, she fell asleep.

Not many days after, Prissy called to chat with the jailer's wife, and learn more about the strange white girl whom the chivalry of the place had consigned to imprisonment. Prissy was no common character. She was a sensible, cheerful-looking mulatto of forty, chubby, smart, and witty; gifted with a good share of intellect and shrewdness, and was widely respected and trusted.

She uniformly wore a turban, gracefully wound from a bandanna, and a neat checked gingham dress. She lived alone in her little brown cottage, not far from the river, and a scheme, worthy of her busy brain, drew her to the apartments of the jailer and his wife.

Prissy was anxious to become, in every respect, equal to the leading class in society. She lacked nothing but a slave, and determined to use her wits to obtain one.

"What's all this fuss they makes about this gal that's locked up?" asked she of the jailer's wife.

"Indeed, I don't know," said Mrs. Conway ;
"I don't keep track of runaways !"

"What'll come of her?" inquired Prissy.

"Indeed, I don't know !" was the reply.

"Who'll pay her jail-fees?"

"Indeed, I don't know !"

"She'll be sold to pay 'em, in course," observed Prissy ; "it comes to that with them that's tooken up an' lodged in jail. All is, when the sale comes off I wants to know. I'm requested to bid her off !"

"If I knows of it, an' don't forget, I'll let ye know !" said Mrs. Conway, as she lighted her pipe and commenced smoking.

"Is Conway in?" asked the caller.

"He's somewhere's about the jail, cl'arin' up, I reckon," answered the wife.

"Tell him I stands ready to pay the jail-fees when they comes due," said Prissy, as she rose to go.

"Very well," returned the lady, "I'll tell him; but what's your hurry?"

"I must be gwine. Left my wash-tub waiting, — washing wont do itself! Good-morning!" and she hurried away.

The jailer coming in soon after, "Look here, Jack," said Mrs. Conway, "Prissy's been here, an' wants to pay that are gal's jail-fees."

"I sha'n't object," said the other. "We haven't paid her our washing bill for the last quarter. Perhaps we can make a turn, and save paying out the money."

"That's the idea," replied she; "you are gitting right smart bright. That's the best bargain you ever made, except when you got me," and she finished with a coarse laugh.

XIX.

A WHITE SLAVE.

NOT many weeks passed before Lottie was an inmate of Prissy's dwelling.

And this fact is worthy of record: "Slavery in America is rapidly ceasing to be negro slavery. It is fast becoming the slavery of the laboring class, irrespective of color." And should it continue, some of those who have fallen in love with it may, in the turning of the wheel of fortune, have the privilege of wearing the yoke themselves.

The courthouse and jail officials were only too glad to get rid of Lottie, and readily gave Prissy leave to take her away, on condition that she paid the jail-fees.

On her way home the Creole bade Lottie walk behind her, adding, "'Cause you is my servant," and deigned her no further notice. Entering her little abode, she commenced, —

"I don't reckon you ever lived in sich a nice house as this afore; poor whites can't afford sich things. This are is mine; paid for every stick of timber, every board an' nail. You is mine, too, — every inch of you. I jist bought you, an' I reckon you is the dirtiest, raggedest thing I ever see. I shall give you a tub of water to wash in, an' an old suit of my clothes, an' see if you can't look a little more decent."

Lottie was in a maze, not knowing what to make of her new relation, but silently did as her mistress bade her.

"I shall 'spect you to do jist as I say," continued Prissy, as she seated herself by a window, to sew on a button and mend a fine shirt, "'cause you is my servant. There," she exclaimed at length, as she surveyed Lottie, washed, combed, and dressed in an old calico. "I make sure I shouldn't known you from Adam. You make quite a likely looking servant." Then, as Lottie seated herself in a chair, "Git up this instant! What do

you mean, to sit down when I am here? You must always stand, as if you was waiting to do somethin'. An' you must eat the bits an' ends, an' the slops, for I don't keep no pig; an' it'll be lots better for you than what you'se been used to."

Lottie's fortitude forsook her, and she burst into tears.

"I want to find Sam!" sobbed she.

"Sam!" echoed Prissy; "who's Sam?"

"He's my brother, and I comed all the way from my hum to find him."

"Sakes alive! you'll never find him," exclaimed Prissy; "he's a slave some'ars, I make sure. If he aint, it's a pity; an' it's my mind if every one of you poor whites was slaves, you'd be lots better off,—you'd have somethin' to do, an' somethin' to eat!"

This was no special comfort to the poor girl, who was really ill with homesickness. The little Piny Wood cottage seemed dearer to her than a palace, and the mean fare of her mother's table more to be desired than a feast,

and the voices of her brothers and sisters the sweetest music in the world. But most of all she longed to hear her mother pray, — for prayer was her only relief; and since she had begun to go to God with her troubles, her mother was tenfold more precious to her.

“You was never half so well off as you is now,” continued Prissy; “an’ if you’ve a spark of sense you’ll find it out, an’ make yourself useful!”

Lottie had dried her tears when thinking of her mother’s prayers. Prissy, little dreaming of what was passing in her mind, concluded that she was getting reconciled to her condition, and added, —

“If you do jist as I tells you, you’ll find me a kind mistress, an’ you’ll be better fed and clothed than you ever was in all your life; better dan de common run of slaves be!”

Lottie said nothing; but she prayed in her heart that God would bring it all out right; that he would hear her mother’s prayers, and let Sam and herself get safely home once more.

"Now sweep up the room!" said Prissy; "let me see if you knows how!" And after it was done, "Sweep it over; you haint larnt my ways, I see! Sweeping is sweeping. When a room is swept, there aint no dirt left behind! There, now you may go down to the vessel with me, after a load of dirty clothes. I want you to larn the way; you'll have to go after 'em right smart often!"

The black mistress then gave her a lesson in balancing the basket on her head; but as often as she put it on, and attempted to walk, down it came, till the Creole was out of patience.

"What a stupid poor white you be! There aint a nigger far and near but can do that the fust time trying. See me, now!" and placing the basket on her own pate, she walked off in her queenly way, as if it belonged there. "There," seizing hold of her, "let me straighten your shoulders! You're that bent over you'll be good for nothin', for totin'! Why can't

you be straight, like folks, an' not bend over as if you was gwine on all fours?"

Many a hard drilling did Prissy give her 'maid in head-toting; but long was it before she could carry an empty basket, much less a loaded one.

Lottie's life was a busy one,—each day crowded with thankless tasks which, to little purpose, she sought to perform to her mistress's satisfaction.

At night Prissy slept "like folks," as she expressed it, in her own nice bed, while wretched Lottie, crushed and dispirited, camped down on the floor at the foot, with only an old blanket to cover her. Poor girl! How she was tried! It seemed as if her prayers never would be answered; but still she kept praying, and the dear mother in the Piney Wood cabin prayed too; it was their only resource.

One night, just after dusk, there was a knock at Prissy's cottage,—no unusual thing, for, as she did washing for the vessels and

sloops in the river, occasionally sailors called to get their clothes, and pay their bills, although it was a part of her business to carry them and collect her dues. It happened that Lottie had gone to one of the schooners, to get a basket of clothes, and Prissy herself went to the door.

"Why hi! Bill Forbes!" exclaimed she, "is that you? How came you here? But come in, and tell me all about it."

"Hush!" whispered her caller, looking apprehensively around as he went in, "it's a secret! For your life don't you breathe it!"

"What's a secret?" asked Prissy, as she placed a seat for him by the fire. "Everybody knows that you was drafted."

"Yes," replied Bill; "but everybody don't know that I am here, and no one must know. I came here on important business, and thought I'd jist call and take the clothes I left when I was toted off in such a hurry."

"Yes," said the laundress, "I've took good care of 'em, an' you shall have 'em."

"Do you live all alone?" asked Forbes.

"Yes, 'ceptin' Lottie. She's my servant, you know."

"An' how came Lottie with you?" asked the soldier.

"Why, hi!" said Prissy, proudly, "I bought her with my own money. There wa'n't nobody but me that had money 'nuff to pay her jail-fees, — ha! ha! — an' so I just took her hum."

"Is she nigger, or mulatter?" asked Forbes.

"She's a poor white, Bill," replied Prissy, earnestly; "an' that's what they're all comin' to; an' lots better off they'll be, too, 'cordin' to my reckonin'!"

"A poor white!" slowly said the soldier, quite taken aback. "I'd ruther be a soldier than a slave. I shall jine the army ag'in if that's so."

"Well, it's so, you may depend," replied Prissy; "there's gwine to be only two sorts, masters an' slaves,—that's what the 'Federates is fightin' for,—an' if a man aint rich 'nuff to

own a slave, he must be one hisself. But you poor whites haint life enough to make good servants. Lottie aint much 'count, no-ways; she's that humsick an' worryin' arter Sam."

"Arter Sam?" said the soldier; "I met a youngster by the name of Sam, when I was in the Great Swamp, an' he was a right smart poor white, too! I'd like to see a nigger boy that could match him!"

"How old was he?" asked Lottie, who had quietly entered, and standing behind Prissy's chair, for some minutes had been a listener to the conversation.

"Wal, Miss," replied the soldier, turning around, "I couldn't say jestly; some'ares about twelve or fourteen, I reckon, an you're the very pictur' of him,—never see sich a strong likeness afore."

"I reckon it's our Sam," said Lottie, greatly excited. "Where is he? Oh, where is he? Can I see him?"

"Bless you, Miss," replied the soldier,

"he's safe; he's to hum, I reckon. I went arter him, an' they told me at a trader's cabin that he'd gone hum with his father."

"I must be gwine!" said Lottie, starting toward the door. "I comed arter Sam, an' if he's found, it's time I was to hum. There wont be nobody to milk the goat; an' mother she'll go crazy if I don't come!"

"Back with you!" exclaimed Prissy, springing up, with flashing eyes, and standing against the door. "You're my slave, an' you don't belong to your mother no more, but to me!"

Lottie sank to the floor, motionless. The kind-hearted soldier looked at Prissy in utter astonishment.

"Ownin' a slave makes a body hard-hearted, that's so! I should think yer'd be glad to let her go, bein' as she wants to."

"Can't help that, noways," replied Prissy, fiercely; "I've done paid for her, an' she's mine, an' she can't stir a step 'less I tell her to!"

"Come now, Prissy, I tell ye what I will do," returned the soldier, coaxingly; "I'll pay you the 'mount of her jail-fees, an' you let the poor creeter go hum. I know a short way to the Piny Wood country."

"Couldn't sell her for that," said Prissy; "you'd hafter double the money!"

"Double the money then!" replied the soldier, "if I hafter go inter the army to arn it!"

"Wal," said Prissy, relentlessly, "when you gits the silver, jist hand it over, an' I'll see about it!"

XX.

THE BASKET ON THE DOOR-STEP.

LOTTIE now began to realize, in good earnest, how hard it is to have one's will entirely controlled by that of another. She was absent and dejected, and her work was done less efficiently than ever.

"'Pears like you is dat stupid," said Prissy one morning, as, after long efforts, Lottie failed to kindle the fire for getting breakfast. "It's mope, mope, all day wid you now. I makes sure you is slower dan a snail. I've got a medicine dat'll cure you. Want I should try it?"

"Don't know," listlessly replied Lottie.

"Wal, what *do* you know? 'Pears like you don't know nothin'. Wake up and do better, or I shall have you taken down to the whipping-post, — that's the medicine we gives

lazy folks ; how'd you like that?" The pining servant made no reply, not knowing what to say. But who may tell how her heart ached to be free from the heavy yoke, and to be sheltered beneath the wing of her mother's love?

Ah, many a poor slave-girl has had the same heart-ache, and found no relief. Lottie's was by no means the worst form of slavery: she had not been sold by her own father, and she did not toil in a rice-swamp beneath a broiling sun. Prissy was exacting and arbitrary; but she could not equal most overseers in cruelty: she needed practice. She was but a novice in tormenting a slave, and her scolding tongue had less and less effect on Lottie, as she became more accustomed to it.

The few words the soldier had dropped in her hearing about her right to be free were much in her mind.

"Course I'se a right to be free," thought she, "an' I shall start off for Piny Wood as

soon as I can." Still week after week passed and she did not get courage to venture. Unlike the seclusion of her old home, she now lived where she could realize that the war was going on, and she feared to undertake the journey, lest she should be taken by the soldiers and sent back.

Companies of armed men paraded the streets, in gray uniforms and badges, and martial music could be heard each day, arousing and inspiring the new recruits. Every one capable of bearing arms was expected to take the field. This was a requisition which could be very generally enforced over the South, from the fact that the great business was agricultural, and performed by the slaves. Conscription ruled, and every man was forced to go, willing or not. Some of the more wealthy paid enormous sums for substitutes; but such were the expenses of living, and so heavy the taxes imposed by the so-called Confederate Government, that only here and there a rich man could raise the money to pay a

poorer one to go in his stead. Negroes, in large numbers, were forced to do the drudgery of the camp, and take the place of the soldiers in handling the spade, and throwing up intrenchments. These arrangements for carrying on the war made much stir in the larger towns, and everybody was talking about everything that was done. Thus, incidentally, the Piny Woods girl gained much information of the progress of events.

The wily leaders of the conspiracy, who for so many years had been stealing funds from the United States Government, and storing up arms, to do the work of traitors, were busy in circulating slanderous reports of the Yankees, thus leading astray the ignorant, unlettered masses, and influencing them to join in the rebellion.

Prissy scarcely knew what to believe. Before she became the owner of a slave, in heart she was a Unionist; but since that memorable era, she talked as strong secession as any one. It made all the difference. If she could be

equal with the dominant race, success to their arms! If otherwise, defeat to them! She, poor thing! had no religious principle to regulate and guide her opinions; and had had little light on the great moral question of the right and wrong of slavery. Had she lived in a heathen land, she would have been just as able to arrive at true conclusions, for the light that was in the South might well be called darkness. As for Lottie, she did not believe in slavery; and if once she could have understood that this war was really waged to establish it on enduring foundations in the land, she would have prayed God to give victory against such a dreadful purpose. Her condition as a slave made her somewhat acquainted with others in bondage.

As she went to and fro with her basket of clothes, she often met old Isaac, who was apt to speak a word of what was on his mind. Since the war had interrupted the trade in staves, he had turned to his former occupation of fishing, hiring his time of his master.

"'Pears like you is a slave for good," said he to Lottie one day. The poor girl's tears were the only reply. "But bless de Lord, honey, de time'll come, — de y'ar ob jubilee. 'Pears like it jist 'pon us!"

"What is that?" asked Lottie.

"Why, honey, don't you know? It's de time when de Lord hear an' answer de prayers ob de poor slave people, — de prayers dat's been risin', risin', risin', all dese sher long years. Some ob de slaves got so tired wait-in', dey say it neber will come; but I sees de signs ob de times, an' 'parently it's right here. We'se gwine to be made free, 'pend upon it!"

"Can I go home then?" earnestly asked Lottie.

"Dat you can, honey; dere'll be no more strouble den, 'pend 'pon it."

It was a word in season to Lottie, who, pondering it in her heart, looked more hopefully on the evils of her lot.

A large proportion of the soldiers encamped in the vicinity of the town were poor whites,

and although, in many cases, they hated the rich slaveholders, yet they were influenced by their opinions. Some of them thought the Yankees cowards, because they did not fight duels, and do other deeds of violence and hate.

"We must keep them are Yanks off!" said a soldier to his comrade, as they were strolling down the street one day.

"That we must," replied the other; "fur if they beats us they'll cut off all the slaves' hands, to spite their masters,* and make us do their work, willing or not."

"I'se hearn tell," continued the first soldier, "that them are Yanks, if they whips us, is gwine to butcher all the slaves, an' bile 'em into broth, an' make us eat it!"

"I shouldn't wonder," answered his companion; "they're in fur doin' 'way with slavery, somehow, if they has to do it by killin' off the niggers!"

*Slanders like this are commonly believed among the poorer classes.

"That's so," said the first; "but you can't, in ginerally, make a nigger believe it. When you gits at their real sentiments, they thinks the Yankees is their friends."

"Yis," returned the other, "an' that's the strouble. If the Yanks marches down this way they'll be awful likely to jine 'em. Fact is, they likes jest the folks their masters hates."

"Sakes alive!" exclaimed the first, "I reckon when the English takes holt with us, we shall collar the Yankees in no time. We'se bound to have 'em help us, you know. The French'll give us a helpin' hand too."

"That's so," said the other. "I'se hearn tell they hates the Yankees worser'n we do."

Just then a third soldier joined them.

"Has you heered the news?" said he.

"What is it?" asked the two, in a breath.

"Why, we'se got four hundred thousand men marchin' on Washington!"

"If it aint half a million, I'm out in my reck'ning."

"Good! good!" shouted the other; "our side'll beat, in course. We'll hang Linkin, an' the rest of them are Abolitionists to the fust tree. My mouth waters when I thinks of the spile that'll fall intow our hands. Sakes alive! we sha'n't be poor whites no longer; we shall be rich as Gresus. Why, hi! I'se hearn say that them are Yankee cities is jist crammed with gold!"

Soldiers calling to have Prissy wash their clothes often held conversations similar to the above, portions of which fell on Lottie's ears, as she stood scrubbing with might and main at the wash-tub.

But she had her own thoughts on what she heard, and her sympathies, like those of most slaves, were with the hated Yankees. Most earnestly did she wish them success; the few words of old Isaac influencing her far more than hours of secession talk.

As time passed, the yoke of servitude pressed more and more heavily. Oh, how long the hours and days seemed! When

would deliverance come? Toiling, wretched days — wakeful, weeping nights!

In addition to Prissy's exacting spirit, there were countless provocations and insults from the sailors and soldiers whom she unavoidably met. So often were these repeated that she dreaded to set foot out of the Creole's cottage; yet every day brought its quota of errands hither and thither.

One evening, just after dark, as with her heavily laden basket on her head she was returning from a vessel at the wharf, a rough-bearded sailor followed her, as he had often done before, to her great terror. She had always escaped him by running for dear life. In this case, in attempting to take her basket from her head, she dropped it, and stopping to pick it up and replace the clothes, the sailor soon came up with her.

"So, you wench," exclaimed he, "I've ketched you at last!" and he grasped at her shoulder, which she eluded by a sudden spring.

It was in the lonely wooded lane leading to Prissy's house, the last place Lottie would have chosen; for, call as loudly as she could, there was no one by to help her. She was in mortal terror of—she scarcely knew what. Would this dreadful man rob her of the money paid her for the washing, kill and hide her in the bushes? Appalled by the thought, she tried to get away; but his strong arm had seized her, and she could not escape.

"Oh, dear! what shall I do?" cried Lottie.
"Don't kill me! don't kill me!"

"Wal, 'pon honor, I wont," said the sailor, "if you'll mind me, an' do jest as I say. I haint had nary squaw this are long time to keep house fur me. If you'll go down the river with me a piece, I'll show you an old cabin, where you shall live an' be my wife."

"Let me tote hum the basket fust," replied Lottie, bent on escaping.

"What do I care for the basket, jade? You mean to git off; do you! I'll kill you fur good, if you do!"

"No, you wont!" said a voice from the thicket at the right, and instantly the report of a gun was heard, the discharge just taking off the top of the sailor's tarpaulin. This sudden turn of affairs set the barbarian *en route* for his vessel, at the top of his speed, and Lottie, rejoicing to be free from his hard gripe, was gatherin gup the basket, when Will Forbes appeared at her side.

"Glad to serve you a turn. Is you Prissy's slave yit?" said he.

"That I is!" she answered in a sad tone.

"So I thought. She wouldn't sell you for money,—not she! She smacks over ownin' a slave! You'd like to be free, in course?"

"That I would!" she quickly replied.

"You shall have a chance then, or my name aint Will Forbes! I'se been night-walkin' up an' down the country, on a leetle business; but I didn't forget Sam nor you. So I looked up the shortest cut to your hum in the Piny Woods, an' if you wants tow go, I'll jist show you on your way a piece."

"I'll go tow onct!" exclaimed Lottie, joyfully.

"How long will it take you tow git ready?"

"I'se all ready now, only jist let me put the basket on Prissy's door-step!"

"Let the plague of a basket go!" returned Forbes; "it's what got you intow trouble jist now. If you hadn't been so careful about it, that sailor wouldn't ketched you. It's likely Prissy'll see you if you go back, an' that'll be the last of your gittin' free."

"I reckon she wont," said Lottie; "an' I sha'n't feel right tow go, if I don't leave the clothes safe on the door-step; them that owns 'em 'll be wantin 'em. I'll be back directly;" and crossing the stile and tripping down the street, as if a new life had been breathed into her, she speedily accomplished her errand, and returned to the by-path where she had left her deliverer.

"Hi! you back so soon!" said he in a low tone. Then, stealthily as an Indian, he started off on an unfrequented route, through

fields and woods, Lottie following at a fleet pace. Scarcely a word was spoken, lest some wandering soldier or patrol might be within hearing. When a long distance from the town, Forbes halted, saying that it was now safe to stop and rest. "You mustn't git tired out when you fust start," said he; "you wont last to git hum if you do." He then pointed to a stump, on which Lottie sat down, while he climbed into a tree, so near as to be almost overhead.

Forbes seemed busy with his own thoughts, and said nothing for some time, but finally broke out, —

"It's this are makin' white folks slaves what's opened my eyes! I see thar's no eend to slavery; it's bound to be on the increase, if you let it have its way; an' that's what makes me ever so much obleeged to them Yankees, that they is gwine to be the hinderin' cause to its puttin' all us poor whites under the yoke. Sakes alive! they'd be slavin' my wife an' children, fust I know.

What if my wife an' my darter was Prissy's slaves ; how'd I like it ? She mought as well claim one poor white as another ? ”

Lottie thought so too ; but was satisfied with the experience she had had of its ill.

“ But you comed off without any supper ? Aint you hungry ? I'se got some hard-tack for you ! ”

“ Oh, no ! ” replied Lottie, “ I isn't hungry, an' I'se rested 'nough. Can't we be gwine ? ”

“ Directly,” returned he ; “ jist you wait till the moon is up ; it's a leetle too dark tow find the path now. Don't you worry ; I reckon we'se safe ; I've got my gun all ready, ye see ! ”

And somewhat quieted by this assurance, and overcome by weariness, she curled down beside the stump, and ere she was aware, fell asleep. How long she slept she knew not ; but was startled from her nap by the soldier's sliding from the tree, and saying in a low voice, —

“ Come, Lottie, it's time to go.”

She did not need a second reminder, but quickly arose and followed her leader. They made good progress that night, and a part of the next day, keeping in an unfrequented path. Lottie was never ready to stop; the strong desire to get home overcoming her sense of fatigue. Will Forbes was obliged to be quite decided in urging her to rest.

Nothing adverse occurred to interrupt their journey, and in less than a week the kind Unionist had guided his charge within a few miles of her home, when, as she knew the way, he took his leave, directing his course toward the camps of the Federal troops.

XXI.

THE REBEL HORSEMAN.

LOTTIE'S mind was so much engrossed with the idea of shortly seeing her own dear kindred that she saw Will Forbes depart scarcely conscious of regret, although she really felt very grateful for his noble efforts for her welfare.

Now that she had gained the sandy road that led through the forest of her childhood, she was thrilled with joyful emotions. Delighted with everything before her, she greeted rotten logs, pine stumps, and lofty trees with a glad look. They were old and cherished acquaintances, and seemed to bid her welcome. But there were stronger attractions ahead. How her heart bounded with the thought of being almost home! The time when she set out to find her brother seemed

like a dream, and so rash and presumptuous ! But God had helped her, and heard her prayers,—she was sure of that,—and now all her troubles, were over.

The leaky, cramped, dingy, tumble-down, loggery, in which she first saw the light, was all the world to her,—just as dear as your comfortable abode is to you, reader. She was congratulating herself that she had almost regained that snug retreat, where no evils would ever overtake her, when suddenly she heard a horseman galloping behind her. Quickly rein-ing his steed by her side, he called out,—

“Where’s you gwine?”

“I’s gwine hum,” replied Lottie, with great simplicity.

“Where’s that?” asked he.

“Out shere ’mong the trees.”

“How’s the old man an’ the boys?”

“I’s gwine to see,” she answered, a little disconcerted.

“That’s right,” said the stranger; “how fur is it?”

"It's right smart little piece," was the reply.

"Straight road?"

"Yes," said Lottie, "straight 'most all the way — crooked some."

"Your father's well an' strong; aint he?"

"I reckon he is," answered Lottie, surprised at the question.

"How many brothers you got?"

"Right smart many." It now struck her that she had seen her interrogator before, and there was that about him which led her to suspect all was not right. But the glitter of something shining under his weather-beaten coat attracted her attention.

"Your brothers stout?" continued he.

"I reckon so," she replied, still wondering at his interest in her family.

At a curve in the road they came in sight of the cabin, when the rider abruptly turned his horse, and galloped away. Lottie felt glad to be so easily rid of him, and hoped never to see his face again.

And now her step quickened, keeping pace

with the beating of her heart. That for which she had so longed and prayed was just within her grasp. Once at home, she would remain there, and no ill would ever again disturb the loved circle. Then she had so many plans for their happiness. Glad was she that her father's cabin was so out of the world in the lonely Piny Wood ; it was all the safer, all the dearer.

With such-like reflections tumultuously filling her brain, she trudged up to the door. The mother was the first to espy her ; a pang shot to the daughter's heart as she saw how wasted and pale she had become.

"Why, darlin' Lottie ! my precious daisy ! is that you ? I was 'fraid we never should set eyes on you ag'in !" exclaimed Mrs. Dean, and she ran to clasp her long-lost child in her arms.

"Oh, mother ! I'se so glad !" cried Lottie, clinging to her, and sobbing convulsively. The father and the children started up shouting and rejoicing, when, all at once, the form

of the horseman darkened the door ; his outer garment laid off disclosed the trappings of a rebel officer.

"Halloa, my man!" said he, as he stepped forward and seized Mr. Dean by the shoulder.

"I'm arter you!"

"Me! me!" stammered Dean, "what's I done?"

"I'll let you know directly. Come on, I'm arter soldiers for Jeff Davis."

"But I've had 'nough of that business!" said Dean.

"Oh, ho!" exclaimed the stranger, "you're the scamp I've hearn tell on, that run off an' lef' his regiment almost afore he 'listed. Wal, I s'pose you knows the consequences; we hangs sich chaps; so march along, old head! I'm ready to string you up to the fust tree!"

"Tell me that ag'in," said Dean, on whose face astonishment, terror, rage were alternately pictured, "an' I'll knock you down!" and he shook off the would-be dignitary, and threw himself into an attitude of defiance.

The household were thunderstruck. Lottie stood aghast at the scene. What had she done? Had she led this fierce man to destroy her father, or to drag him into the war?

The officer stepped to the door, and instantly two soldiers made their appearance.

"You'll find it's no use," growled he between his teeth, with a savage oath. "I didn't come alone!"

Mr. Dean, perceiving that he could accomplish nothing by resistance, cooled down, and submitted to have things take their course.

Mrs. Dean, meanwhile, forgetting the joy of finding her darling child, clung to her husband with the vain hope of saving him from his captors.

But no one of all the group was more intensely exercised than Sam. He had watched the intruder from the moment he entered. Ah! he had good reason to watch him. He was the likeness of the kidnapper Workfork, who a few months before had so unceremoniously made him a slave. Who could it be?

For had he not seen that monster die by the bullet of the swamp-man? As he stood with folded arms mentally making these startling queries, and weighing the pros and cons, the eye of the recruiter fell on him.

"Halloa, youngster! you belongs to me, I reckon. Here's a chance for you. Plenty of corn-bread, bacon, an' whiskey, an' eight dollars to boot."

Sam made no reply, but stood scrutinizing him with folded arms.

"Come, youngster, what do you say to that?"

"Thought you was dead!" said Sam.

"Me! ha! ha! not so easy killed. I just played possum, an' got off, you see; but that are flesh-wound bled awful, that's so! Was it you that shot me?"

"No!" replied Sam, doggedly. "I wish I had."

"Ha! ha!" laughed the Confederates, "he's got the grit; make a fine soldier; we mustn't leave him behind!"

"You've got good pluck, youngster," said Workfork. "But no more of this to your s'perior officer! It'll cost you dear if you do."

"Sam, he aint nothin' but a boy," plead the father; "he couldn't kill a coon!"

"We'll see," said Workfork; "anyhow, he's got tow sarve. We takes all over fifteen!"

"I—I"—stammered Mr. Dean, for he was more afflicted with the idea of Sam's fate than of his own.

"Never mind the I's," replied Workfork. "He'll git shed of the turpentine business, feed an' clothe the family, and build a new cabin afore the year is out. Come on, both on ye; willing or not, you've got tow go!"

"Wall, Sam," said Mr. Dean, "I reckon we shall hafter do as they say."

"March along!" cried Workfork; "we'se got a right smart company jest down here in the woods. If you doos well, we'll let by-gones alone, and if you tries to desert ag'in, we'll rake up everything ag'in' you, an' you wont be a trouble to society an hour arter."

"But hold on! What you got tow pay yer taxes with to the 'Federate Government?" asked he, turning the subject.

"We haint got nothin'," replied Mr. Dean; "poor whites aint 'spected tow have no taxes."

"But they is these sher war times," returned Workfork. "We makes everything tell. Let's see — wife, chil'en, an' goat; markit's dull fur slaves, I reckon we'll take the goat along."

"No! no!" called out Tomtit, with flashing eyes; "that's my goat; taint dad's nor Sam's!" and he sprung forward to lead the creature away.

"Get out, you whelp!" shouted Workfork, who, having just mounted his horse, now stooped to give Tomtit a cut with his riding-whip. "Sniper, take the critter along," he added, and after a brief struggle with the faithful animal, which seemed bent on remaining with the cabin group, it was bound and slung across the horse behind Sniper.

It was the last pound in the camel's load of grief which the desolate household were called on to bear, and the little children cried as if their hearts would break as their pet and play-mate was torn from them.

"Lang with you ! march," shouted Captain Workfork ; and the father and son were driven before the cavalry-men toward camp.

Meanwhile, the little Deans left behind — a terrified, stricken brood — gathered around their mother who had sunk down weeping in a corner of the cabin.

Lottie, John, and Tomtit remained without, watching the company passing down the road until they could no longer be seen.

"If I was o'ny big as dad," exclaimed Tomtit, "I'd kill that man afore I'd let him take off my goat."

"I hopes they'll let Pinky out to graze, an' she'll be sure to run hum," said John.

"It's too bad to lose 'em all to onct," cried Lottie. "What shall we do? What a dreadful war this is?"

"I on'y wish I was a little bigger," said Tomtit; "I'd larn to fight, an' I'd whip them that takes off dad an' Sam an' our goat."

"An' I too," added John.

Lottie now went in to comfort her mother. Poor Mrs. Dean, she felt it no small relief that her loved daughter could be with her, but was nevertheless overborne with the new sorrow. If she could only know where her husband and son were going, and sometimes hear from them, what an alleviation it would be. As it was, she had in a sense buried them; they were lost to her. The key of knowledge had been taken from her; she could neither read nor write. Of the war and its progress she knew almost nothing. The future was a dreadful unknown. The last terrible calamity so oppressed her that she could not even pray.

Lottie now proved herself a genuine helper; she fought bravely against sorrow, arousing herself for the sake of her dear mother.

"God is so good to let me come now," said she.

"Yes, child," replied Mrs. Dean.

"Come, Lottie, why can't you tell us where you been, an' all about it?" asked Tomtit.

The little circle gathered around their sister, listening with eyes and ears intent, and even Mrs. Dean's attention was diverted from her grief, as the recital went on; and as the dear girl recounted God's care of her, hope sprang up in the mother's heart, and she thought, "God has been so good to Lottie, I will trust him still."

Meanwhile, Mr. Dean and Sam pushed on before their captors, in no very amiable mood. Reaching a cart-path which ran at right angles to the main road, they were ordered to take it, and after a short tramp, coming to a shanty once used by the turpentine gatherers, they met a squad of poor whites, conscripts like themselves, under military guard.

"Halloa, Gookin!" shouted Captain Workfork, "bring yer men intow line!" This order was promptly obeyed, Gookin and men leading off Mr. Dean and Sam.

—
Their appearance would very naturally have called to mind the old ditty : —

“ The beggars are coming to town :
Some in rags, and some in shags, — ”

Certain it is, that the almshouses of more than one State in the Union could extemporize a better-dressed and more hopeful-looking set of men, at a moment's notice.

Haggard, squalid, pallid, and sickly ; clad in linsey-woolsey or jean shirts and trousers, — the original color of which it was impossible to determine, so disguised were they with dirt, — they conveyed the impression of being the most hapless peasants of which any poverty-struck, tyranny-ruled country could boast.

Slouched hats drooped in folds over their weather-beaten faces, long matted locks and shaggy beards conspired to make them look disgusting and hideous. Some of them had a hang-dog look ; others glared fierce with hunger and the desire of plunder. The promise of plenty to eat, and a chance to make spoil,

were inducements enough to fire the latter with a zeal for secession, although, ignorant creatures that they were, they knew nothing of the merits of the cause for which they had enlisted to shed their blood.

Our heroes soon arrived at their temporary destination, which was a camp in the neighborhood. Here they were treated to rations of bacon and corn-bread, and then introduced to their first lesson in military tactics. When sufficient accessions had been made to their number, the order came for them to remove. Where, no one of the soldiers could tell; it was only known by one or two of the officers. It was understood that a very important secret mission was on foot, and every man was expected to do his duty.

XXII.

ROANOKE ISLAND.

THERE was no little curiosity among the troops designated for the new expedition to learn where they were going. They were hurried through the country to Winton, on the Chowan River, where they embarked on board of rebel gunboats which awaited their arrival. As they glided down the stream, into Albemarle Sound, at the close of a calm winter's day, clusters of poor whites gathered on deck, still speculating about their probable destination.

They were a peculiar set of men, of all shades and descriptions of character, from the inefficient, spiritless, do-nothing to the fierce bandit-looking customer, whose slumbering passions, roused by the stir of the times, prepared him for the congenial scenes

of blood and plunder. There were men among them whose presence would give one's throat and pocket an uneasy sensation. Those whose life had been given to yawning and talk were the most loquacious now.

"I reckon we'se gwine to fight the Yanks, up North," said a rough-looking man to Mr. Dean.

"I reckon not!" was the reply.

"But I knows we be!" replied the other positively. "I heered the gin'ral say we war gwine to throw up defences, an' keep them are Yanks close, so they couldn't budge foot! An' that's what's we'se gwine to do!"

"Sakes alive!" exclaimed Mr. Dean; "you don't say!"

"Yis," returned his comrade, of late a turpentine gatherer, pallid and sickly, who had spent all his life in the dim shade of the pine forests, and only had mental activity enough to love the marvellous.

"What's so many niggers aboard for?" asked Sam.

"Oh, they're gwine to help dig trenches to bury the Yankees in!" was the answer.

"I makes sure we'll be rich arter this are trip!" said another, as he puffed away at a broken pipe; his mainstay for a living had formerly been loafing, hunting, and stealing.

But despite the dreams of these rustics, on went the gunboats, south, south, more than fifty miles; then east, southeast, through Albemarle Sound, and, in the very heart of the strait that leads to Pamlico Sound, put into Ashley's Harbor, at Roanoke Island, which is twelve miles long and three broad.

What were the gunboats to do there? To answer this question we must retrace our course a little.

Forts Clark and Hatteras, which commanded Hatteras Inlet, had been taken by Commodore Stringham and Gen. Butler during the previous summer, — the thunder of the bombardment resounding even to Washington, N. C., where Lottie chanced then to be. The loss of these forts struck consternation to the

hearts of the rebels, although, from sheer habit, those not immediately engaged in the battle kept up a show of bravado over the cowardly Yanks, as they termed their invaders.

But the forts were effectually captured, preserved and garrisoned for the Union. The position was of great importance to our country's cause. It was again a refuge for the seamen, in the fierce storms so common on this treacherous coast. Hence it was indispensable to our commerce. Gen. Butler thus viewed it when he said, —

“By holding it, Hatteras light may again send forth its cheering ray to the storm-beaten mariner, of which the worse than Vandalism of the rebels deprives him.”

But how were the secessionists to spare Hatteras Inlet? It was the very key to Albemarle Sound. Vessels drawing fifteen feet of water navigated its channel, and passing on, found a harbor wide and safe in all weathers. Gunboats of light draught could

start from this point and attack the whole coast of North Carolina and Virginia, from Cape Lookout to Norfolk, and by threading the large rivers, subdue immense portions of inland country, and take command of the leading cities of the State.

How, then, could the secessionists recover from their defeat? How compensate themselves for their great loss? The more intelligent among them were not long in answering these vital questions, but hastened to make the most of what remained to them. These were the defences on Roanoke Island, which locality was about fifty miles north of the Inlet, and if suitably fortified, would still hold the entrance to Albemarle Sound, and preserve to the rebels full half of the Carolina coast and inland territory.

The inexorable draft was again enforced with a relentlessness which only the Southerner has experienced.

As the news of this measure spread through Edenton and Chowan Counties, which were

loyal, hundreds of Union men forsook their homes, and hurried by night, or stealthily, to the Federal gunboats, for employment and protection.

Many young men, from good loyal families, whom the draft overtook, fled and secreted themselves in the swamps with which the rivers of that region are often belted for miles, their relatives only, who fed and clothed them, knowing where they were hidden.

And the gunboats, freighted with their motley assemblage of troops and negroes, had something to do on Roanoke Island, which was to be defended, at all hazards, from the incursions of the Northern troops. Already the fortifications were progressing towards completion; but still much was to be done. The forts were to be garrisoned, more intrenchments thrown up, and the batteries manned.

News had reached the rebel authorities that Gen. Burnside, with a squadron of one hun-

dred vessels, had safely passed Hatteras Inlet. He must be kept at bay if possible, and all the resources of rebel skill and consummate engineering must be brought into exercise to make the island impregnable. The strait on each side being only from one to two miles wide, the narrow, winding channel could be easily guarded by batteries on the island.

As this strait was the door to Albemarle Sound, the Confederates were specially anxious to keep it fast shut, that the Government forces might not pass through. The island seemed just fitted for that purpose. It had numerous eminences, admirably adapted to give their batteries effective positions, so that both offensive and defensive movements could be carried on to advantage. No better engineers than those employed in the construction of these works could be found in the country. They had been educated at West Point, in the most careful and thorough manner, at the expense of the very government which now so wantonly they were seeking to overturn.

One day the chief of the engineers mounted his horse for the purpose of reviewing the defences, in company with Col. Jordan and Col. Pool, — prominent secession officers, — when Col. Jordan remarked, —

“Let us make it a point now to ascertain what more can be done to strengthen our works.”

“Exactly,” returned the chief; “but in my judgment they are nearly perfect. Let us pass around and examine them.” They then turned their horses’ heads to the central fort, opposite Ashley’s Harbor.

“I claim for this fort,” said the engineer, “the best site in the country. Do you see those impassable morasses that stretch away on each side, down to the water. On the south side the swamps and thickets are no less impenetrable. I tell you, sirs, nature has been the ready handmaid of art in the construction of this strong fortification. You see we can only reach it by means of this long, narrow causeway.” The three riders were at

the moment guiding their horses over the road made of logs, laid side by side on the bog. "This approach," continued he, "can be of no possible advantage to an enemy, raked as it is by these heavy field-pieces." As he spoke, pointing with his riding-whip to the glistening rows of cannon on either side. "Then what intrenchments! What massive ramparts! And do you not see those heavy guns frowning through the embrasures?"

"This is indeed a stronghold," rejoined Col. Jordan, reining in his steed, and leisurely surveying the different points of strength.

"It is so," replied the engineer. "I designed it to be impregnable; it is the strongest fortification on the island."

"Why not put the most effective works on the southern shore?" asked Col. Pool. "It strikes me that the enemy will be most likely to attack that locality first."

"Why not? For this reason," replied the engineer. "Nature did not assist us so much, and it would cost ten times the ex-

pense, besides occupying months more of time. We could not be sure that Burnside would wait till we were ready to receive him."

"I recollect that you gave these reasons when we talked over our plans," said Col. Jordan. "You judged wisely."

"We have meanwhile posted thousands of well-armed men on the southern shore, to prevent our foe from effecting a landing."

"That is well," observed Col. Pool.

"But suppose," said the engineer, "that the Yankees should land; they can reap no possible advantage from the movement. Our central fort will prevent their progress up the island; and do you not see that, hemmed in between our fortifications and the water, we shall have them at our mercy?"

"Of course," returned Col. Pool, "and no Yankee would think of venturing into our swamps; they'd find the mire and water a little too deep for them."

"That's so!" chimed in Col. Jordan, and having dismounted, they finished surveying

the fortifications, giving some time to its internal arrangements.

The fort at Parks' Point underwent a similar examination. This was a spacious structure, octagonal in shape, and covering five acres. It was strongly built, and armed with ten guns and two rifled cannon.

"The centre of the island is thoroughly fortified," said the engineer. "The causeway is not only defended by the central fort and by the guns at Parks' Point, but by this effective battery to the right. No mortal force can carry these works."

"Of course not!" returned Col. Jordan.

"Shall we have time to-day to review Thier's Point, on the northern shore?" asked Col. Pool. "I'd like to see how the slaves come on throwing up the intrenchments."

"I was up there yesterday," replied the other officer; "there were five hundred slaves hard at work, and the wall of sand is already more than twenty feet thick. That fortress is fast getting to be impregnable."

"That is well," said the engineer; "but I should admire to see Burnside's fleet attempt the passage of the strait opposite."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Col. Jordan, "there will be some fun when he tries that game. The channel is commanded by all these central forts, and ever so many batteries, distant only a half-mile. We shall cripple and scatter his fleet without doubt."

He spoke advisedly, for, not satisfied with these extensive preparations for the expected foe, the rebels had made all haste to render the passage of the strait seemingly impossible, by filling in sharp timbers, trunks of trees, and sunken hulls, forming a dangerous array of snags, which would expose the parties attempting to remove them to the murderous fire of the forts.

This incredible labor fell upon the negroes and poor whites, and from early dawn till late at night they were kept busy by their taskmasters, among whom Workfork and Sniper figured.

Mr. Dean and Sam were not exempted from the toil required of their class, and ere all was in readiness for their enemies, were, as well as most of the laborers, nearly worn out.

Meanwhile reports almost daily reached the rebel officers of the certain meditated approach of the naval armament. But when they looked upon their own formidable defences, they were full of courage, deeming themselves invincible.

Besides their three forts and numerous batteries, had they not made the strait inaccessible? And more, had they not eight well-armed gunboats ready to aid the forts in attacking the expected fleet, each of these boats bearing two heavy guns, one of which was a 32-pounder, rifled? The batteries on the island were manned with two thousand three hundred men. On the outer beach, at Nag's Head, were five thousand. How, then, could they fail to disable their assailants?

The delay of Burnside they were inclined

to construe favorably to their own interests. He had doubtless heard of their vast preparations, and turned his attention to another quarter, for it was now two weeks since his armament entered the inlet. What could he be doing?

This question was not alone asked by the rebels. Northerners themselves criticised the seemingly slow movement. Few, however, realized the toilsome service that made busy the warrior patriot's days and sleepless his nights. It was no slight matter to repair the damage of the Hatteras storm, which he had encountered ere he was sheltered in the inlet.

At length, on the morning of February 5, the looked-for signal was given, and the fleet got under way.

First came Com. Goldsborough and his well-disciplined little navy; then followed the transports, — the entire squadron making an imposing show. The naval part of the armament was led by the flag-ship "Philadelphia." Gen. Burnside was on board the lively little

Picket, which danced over the waters, before the transports. The morning was bright and sunny ; but as the wind was of no special advantage, the steamers towed the sail-vessels, and the fleet moved only about five miles an hour.

It was nearly sunset.

"There they are !" exclaimed an officer, as peering through his glass incredulously, he saw, from the southern shore of Roanoke Island, the leading ships, while yet some ten miles distant.

"The Yankees are coming !" passed like lightning from mouth to mouth. It was perceived that the whole squadron of one hundred vessels were assembling and casting anchor in a semicircle around the flag-ship. Not a breeze disturbed the tranquil sound, and as night fell, the rigging of the vessels gleamed with brilliant lanterns. The white cottages, too, on shore — the comfortable quarters of the Confederate leaders — were lighted up, and their occupants made haste to

confer with each other, and prepare their troops for the approaching deadly contest.

Glad were they that the morning of Wednesday the sixth dawned, heavy with clouds, presaging another Hatteras storm. The enemy could not be discerned through the fog and the drizzling rain, and the insurgents felt that they should escape an engagement for the day. They accordingly despatched two steamers down the sound to make a reconnoissance of the national fleet. To their surprise they found it advancing, and within three miles of the southern end of the island. Cutting short their observations, they hastened back with the evil tidings. The fog was dense, and night set in stormy, with wind and rain.

Another morning, the seventh, opened, dim with dark clouds and fog; nothing could be seen at two miles distance. But the wind finally changing to the southwest, bits of blue sky appeared, and the Confederates distinctly heard a thunder-peal of cheers from the Gov-

ernment ships, which indicated to them that they were in motion, and would soon bear down upon them. By the aid of glasses, the rebel commanders in the fortifications saw the fleet entering Croaton Strait, which is only one mile wide.

"Ha! ha!" laughed the general commanding, "we'll give them some nuts to crack!" speaking to an inferior officer, and alluding to the heavy batteries with which the whole upper half of the island was closely defended.

On came the ships through the narrow channel, in an imposing procession eight miles long. The foremost vessels soon reached the first battery at Parks' Point, midway of the island. Mr. Dean was one of the poor whites who, with other Carolinians, was appointed to man this battery. Well he knew that just opposite, in the sound, was the first line of piles and sunken vessels, for he had aided in the work of placing these obstructions in the channel. He was not a little curious to see what the persevering Northerners would do with them.

The rebel gunboats had stationed themselves between this barricade and the shore, and if worsted, could not be pursued and captured. A part of the fleet at once assailed these gunboats, while others commenced a heavy cannonading upon the battery. The gunboats soon succumbed to the galling, ceaseless firing, and moved off, at which time the concentrated charge of the fleet fell upon the battery.

The rebel troops, many of them poor whites, and unused to the din of battle, were at first too much overawed to return the fire with much effect. For a time, after the onset, scarcely a man among them could be found sufficiently courageous to stand by the guns, as the hot storm of shot and shell fell like hail upon the batteries. Mr. Dean honestly owned to his fellow-soldiers that he did not see the use of throwing away his life in the first battle, when the odds were so much against them. The commander, chagrined and enraged, vainly urged his men to fight.

Their consternation was too extreme, and for hours only occasional responses were made from this battery.

But while the war-ships are pouring in their hurtling tempest of shells upon hapless Parks' Point, let us take a peep at the southern end of the island, where the transports have cast anchor. Two thousand secessionists were stationed on the shore, to prevent the landing of the United States troops. Sam was one of this rebel detachment; they were armed with rifles, and had charge of three heavy guns. Securely hidden in the borders of the forest, as a boat with a reconnoitring party from the transports approached the shore, the rebels fired upon them from their covert behind the trees. This was seen by the "Delaware," a Federal gunboat lying a few hundred yards off. Quickly five or six dozen of nine-inch shrapnell shells came shrieking into the woods. Sam, to whom the preliminaries of the conflict had been full of interest, and the battle a game he wished to see played out,

did not so much relish this hot iron shower, and not being in full sympathy with secession, exclaimed, —

“Oh! oh! I didn’t reckon them are Yankees was so awful fierce!” so throwing down his rifle, made haste to retreat. Indeed, few could withstand the fiery deluge, and the entire force of two thousand rebels scud like frightened deer, leaving their cannon, muskets, and invaders to take care of themselves, no matter how, so long as they did not impede their flight. The Federal soldiers, after this, disembarked as peacefully as if they already held the island.

At three o’clock the United States flag was raised at Ashley’s Harbor, — a point opposite the centre of the island. The firing continued at the battery, — the Southerners, after all, holding it with great bravery. The heavy shot of the batteries and rebel gunboats had injured some of the United States ships, and killed and wounded a few of the seamen.

With the first light of Thursday, the eighth,

the fleet opened on the battery which was still in the hands of the Confederates. Some of the rebel gunboats, having gone to Norfolk for reinforcements, returning about nine o'clock, landed a large force on the northern part of the island. The squadron could not hinder this movement, not being able to pass through the obstructed channel. Meanwhile, keeping up a fierce cannonading and rain of shells upon the batteries, Lieut. Jeffries, with eight gunboats, was selected to remove the piles and sunken vessels, and clear the passage of the sound. Instantly three rebel batteries fired upon them. But nothing daunted, they went on with their work, removed the barriers, and one by one the eight gunboats swept through the opening, and safely anchored above, in the sound.

Many of the two thousand men who had so hastily quit their station at the lower end of the island, the day before, after plunging through marshes and thickets, had reached a fort in the interior,—a strong intrenchment.

As for the Federal soldiers who had landed that day, they had passed but a comfortless night, being obliged to bivouac without shelter on the bleak shore, chilled with the north wind and drenched with the rain. But their courage and cheerfulness did not forsake them. They had effected a landing, with the loss of only four killed and eight wounded, and as the morning dawned, taking a hasty lunch of hard bread, they started, under Gen. Reno, on their tramp northward, to assail the rebels in their central fortress. Following the trail of the Confederates, who had thrown away their guns in their flight the day previous, after hours of hard marching they came in sight of the fort. Gen. Foster's brigade commenced the attack with muskets and field-pieces. The rebels had become inspirited, the day before, by the arrival of Capt. O. Jennings Wise—son of Gov. Wise, of Virginia—with eight hundred men. A fiercer secessionist did not exist. He declared that he would fight the Union as long as he lived.



* CHARGE ON THE REBEL BATTERIES. Page 285.

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As the noble Col. Russell, of the Conn. 10th, pressed forward, cheering on his men, "unconscious of danger, and incapable of the emotion of fear," Capt. Wise was infuriated with the savage ferocity of the wild beast. "That boy shall die!" growled he; and as the gallant young colonel stood firm in the fight, a bullet pierced his heart, and he dropped dead without a word or a groan. Thus died a Christian soldier. The ammunition of the Federal soldiers was gone, and they must either retire or charge the battery by a desperate assault.

"Zouaves, storm the battery!" cried Gen. Foster.

Instantly they swept, tempest-like, across the narrow causeway, despite its line of bristling cannon, with their war-cry, "Zou! zou! zou!" — the thousand voices sounding loud above the din of battle. Such an assault, from such impetuous yet well-disciplined men, was so unexpected and so terrific, that the rebels, paralyzed with fear and trembling, made no

resistance, but turned and fled, leaving their besiegers to clamber over the ramparts and take possession of the vacant fort.

With the fall of this stronghold came the tide of victory to the Northern troops. Following up the rebels in close pursuit, they forced them to lay down their arms and surrender. Col. Jordan, with eight hundred men, was thus overtaken and brought to terms.

Col. Poole, of the North Carolina Volunteers, came forward with a flag of truce, when he saw General Foster approaching, and asked him on what terms he would accept their surrender.

"Unconditionally!" was the answer.

"How much time can we have for consideration?"

"Only time to report to your superior officer."

Shortly the flag was brought back with the agreement to surrender. Thus was yielded up to the national arms all the batteries, for-

tifications, and troops of the island ; and before night of that eventful day, the stars and stripes waved over all the rebel bastions.

This victory was of the first importance ; it was not simply reclaiming the island from the sway of the foe, but Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds, and the vast territory bordering on the internal waters connected with them. As one has well said, that was a week of glorious work for God and humanity.

XXIII.

THE BOY HERO.

SAM, having gained the central fort, after his precipitate flight from the southern shore, turned to survey the scene behind him. His nimble feet had carried him quite in advance of his older and slower comrades. As he looked back on the advancing crowds of his fellow-rebels, flying, like himself, from the Yankee shells, a sense of mortification for his cowardice began to rise within him. He felt ashamed of the part he had acted. His self-respect was wounded, and by the next day, when the pursuing Federals were ready to attack the stronghold in which he had taken refuge, his young blood was at war-heat. The reaction made a hero of him. Here and there, wherever most needed, he was at hand; now passing powder and shells to the artiller-

ists ; now seizing a gun and discharging it at the assailants, he was a marvel of activity and daring. Had the fort been garrisoned by such spirits, the result might have been disastrous to the foe. He fought without reflection, not thinking of or caring about the right or the wrong of the struggle, influenced only by the excitement of the conflict, and acting out the fight that was in him.

Rebel and Unionist alike looked with wonder on the boy hero. It seemed a miracle that he was not killed. He appeared to have a charmed life ; but more than once, when exposed to the unfailing aim of the Northern sharp-shooter, the rifle was nobly turned aside from compassion for his youthfulness and admiration of his bravery. And when the ammunition of the Federals gave out and the Zouaves made their magnificent charge, clambering over the battlements, with the dreaded cry "Zou ! zou !" one of them exclaimed, as Sam stood fearlessly firing upon them, —

"That boy must be captured, or he'll be killed!"

Sam, scorning to yield, furiously turned upon his opponent; but the weapon he brandished was dexterously struck from his hands, and a pair of brawny arms closed upon him with a vicelike grasp.

"Now, my boy," said the victor, "you might as well stop first as last. Shame on the merciless traitors who drag such a child as you are into this unholy war!"

The calm, kind words, and the forbearance which accompanied them had a strange effect on Sam; they were so unlike the volcanic ferocity of the secessionists. Rebel officers and privates were filled with hatred; their passions easily gained the ascendancy; they were violent and revengeful. But here was a man — one of the dreadful Yankees even, those human monsters about whom he had heard such horrid stories, and whose life he had sought to take — pitying him right there in the heat of the fight! What did it mean?

Ah, Sam! freedom and slavery breathe a different spirit. One is intelligent, thoughtful, humane, magnanimous; the other unreasoning, turbulent, selfish, murderous.

One day, after the surrender of the fort, the Zouave who had captured Sam, and who had taken a great fancy to him, pointed him out to Gen. Foster, saying, —

“There’s the young rebel I told you about, general! Brave as a Trojan; a fine boy he is too; pity he was born down in this dark place, to hear secession lies.”

“Come here, my lad,” said the officer, who was struck with his frank and thoughtful face.

“What is your name?”

“Sam Dean!” was the cool reply.

“Well, Sam,” said his questioner, “did you ever go to school?”

“What’s that?” asked Sam.

“It’s where boys like you are taught to read and write, and fitted to get a good living in the world!”

“We don’t have no sich things this way,”

replied Sam; "an' little good would they do us, I'm thinkin', where there's no business but drivin' hum the goat an' gittin' turpentine!"

"But where I came from every boy and girl, no matter how poor their parents may be, can have a good education; and there's work enough, and good pay, for all who wish it. Do you know, my boy, why it is different here? It is because the rich planters will have their slaves, who are made to do the work for nothing. Slavery keeps down the poor, and enriches the few at the expense of the poor!"

"That's so!" said Sam; "the niggers gets all the work, — they *has* to do it, too, — an' there's nobody rich but the slavery men!"

"And yet," returned the officer, "you were fighting the other day to help these slaveholders keep down you and your people and the poor blacks in just that wretched condition."

"No, I wasn't!" replied Sam, spiritedly; "I fit 'cause I wanted to, an' couldn't help it!"

"Yes, that is true, I have no doubt," rejoined the general, smiling; "but that is not what I mean. I mean to say that every blow you struck for the Confederates helped slavery! That's what the war is about. Davis and his fellows were once in office under the United States Government; they took oath to support it."

"Did!" said Sam. "Why did they turn?" for?"

"Because," was the reply, "they wanted to make slavery continue, and grow stronger and stronger. They violated their oaths, and became rebels, setting up a government for themselves, based on human bondage."

In terse, simple language, he then sketched the history of the conspiracy. His listener saw the truthfulness of his reasoning. The experience he had had with the kidnapper confirming what was said. The light of conviction broke in, full-orbed, upon him, and he exclaimed, —

"That's so! an' nobody wont ketch me fightin' on the slavery side ag'in!"

"But how did you come in such bad company?" asked the officer.

"I didn't come in it," said Sam; "they took me by force, without my leave."

And in his own earnest way he then went on with the account of his adventures with Workfork, in the first case, and of the subsequent conscription of himself and father.

The general was deeply touched by his graphic recital, and asked him where his father was.

"That's what I've been tryin' to find out," replied he. "I haven't seen him since the battle. He was stationed at Parks' Point battery, an' I fear he's killed."

"I think not," said the officer. "Tell me how he looks, and what he wore." And after hearing Sam's description, he added, "I shall know him if I meet with him; he may, however, have left the island, for thousands of rebel troops escaped in their gunboats, and a part of our fleet are in pursuit. Meanwhile, as you are sick of secession, how would you

like to take the oath of allegiance, and agree to stand by the old flag ! ”

“ That’s jist what I’ll do ! ” warmly answered Sam. “ There’s some sense in that. ”

The oath was then duly administered, after which the officer said, —

“ We will find something useful for you to do in the United States service, and you shall have an opportunity to learn to read and write ; and if you are faithful in your duties, there’ll yet be a chance for you to rise and be somebody. ”

Sam’s face grew radiant, and he looked the thanks he could not find words to express. His kind benefactor then presented him with a Federal suit ; and, clad from top to toe in his new regimentals, he was elevated and inspired by the thought, which now he began to realize, that he was on the side of freedom and his country.

One morning, very early, Sam was despatched with a message to an officer in the central fort.

In passing over the log causeway which led to the entrance, he heard a groan,—seemingly from behind the silent row of cannon on his right, —and turning to see who it might be, in the dim twilight he caught sight of some one skulking along by the wall, as if afraid of being seen. Thinking it was a rebel prisoner escaping, Sam appeared not to see him, but changed his position, so as to get a better view. The fugitive stealthily crept on till he came to a huge pile of rubbish which had been thrown up by the soldiers; dropping to his hands and knees, he crawled behind it, and, snake-fashion, wriggled himself as far under the edge of the heap as he could, and kept quite still.

Sam's quick eye detected in the retreating form, the figure and movements of his old enemy, Workfork. He was sure that, clad in his new suit, the latter did not recognize him, and while he sternly resolved that the kidnapper should not slip away to do more evil, he felt a strong disposition to have a lit-

tle fun out of the adventure. Passing on, as if ignorant of Workfork's proximity, till opposite his place of concealment, he suddenly sprang against the rubbish heap with such force as to cause it to fall over, pinning the rebel captain effectually to the ground.

"Oh! oh!" wheezed Workfork, for, lying face downward, the crushing weight on his back made his utterance thick.

"Who's there?" called out Sam, in pompous tones, borrowed for the occasion.

"Friend!" was the reply. "Who's you — Reb or Fed?"

"Civil question to me!" said Sam. "Which are you, dirt-face?"

"I aint much 'count, no way," returned Workfork, in a subservient tone, thinking he was talking with a military official. "I'll be ary one, jist as you please, Mr. Officer, if you'll on'y git this are big load off my back."

"Couldn't do't; can't 'ford to turn poor white or nig, an' wait on you!" returned Sam.

"What you gwine to do with me?" whined the captive.

"If you're a Union man, send my boys to help you out; if you're secesh, let you rot, as you deserve. All you's good for, in that case, is to be 'sessed as real estate; you're dirty as the very sile itself! We Feds don't hold to personal property."

"Bless your soul an' body, Mr. Officer," said he under the heap, "I'm jist the strongest Union man! 'pon honor, I is, actuali. I aint lyin' a dust nur a mite when I sez it. Git me out, an' I'll sarve you up hill an' down, all my life!"

"Will you take the oath of 'legiance?" asked Sam.

"Sartinli!" was the reply. "I alus believed in it. Them are United States Government is a great consarn. I vote fur the Union an' the Constitution!"

"Well, I reckon I'll go about my own affairs. Business is pressin', an', as you say, you aint of much 'count!"

"Oh, don't, don't leave me, Mr. Officer; wait a minute! You jist stoop down here, an' let me give you my gold watch, if you'll on'y let me go. Here 'tis. I can jist reach the chain; an' I'll give you heaps of money too!"

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Sam, forgetting his assumed character; "where'd you git your gold watch an' money?"

"Bought the watch with my money, in course," replied Workfork. "But sakes alive! don't I know your voice? If you aint Sam Dean, then I'm out in my reck'nin'."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Sam; "but how *did* you crawl under that big heap?"

"Don't laugh at a fellar!" groaned Workfork; "but I'se that glad it's you. I alus was a friend of your'n, an' you alus was a good boy, Sam; an' if you is an officer now, you'll do this little turn fur me, I know. I sets a heap of store by you, Sam; I does, actuali. Never was so glad tow see a fellar in my life! I alus was a good friend tow you, you know, Sam. I gin you a ride when you was so tired

leadin' the goat; an' don't you remember how I gin you lots of candy an' oranges. It was me that made you intow a man an' a soldier. One good turn desaves another; can't you help me a leetle now?"

Sam took a somewhat different view of Workfork's services; but choking his indignation, asked how he came there.

"Jist help me out, can't you? I was hidin' here, as peaceable as could be, fur want of a better place, when what does some un do but kiver me up in this are rubbish! I can't stir hand nor foot!"

"What you gwine to do, if I help you out?" asked Sam.

"That's 'cordin to circumstances. If the secesh beats the Yanks, I shall have 'nough to occupy me in my old line, buyin' an' sellin' slaves; but if the Yanks beats, I shall find suthin' or other to do; the secesh'll pay me well for worryin' 'em, I reckons. I'll tell you what, Sam, jist git me loose, an' you an' I'll take a boat an' row up to the Great Swamp.

I knows of good places there to hide, an' git a livin' in. There's lots of boats gwine up an' down the canal, filled with all sorts of good things to eat, an' if we gits hungry, we can show fight, an' make the traders give us a sheer."

"But," said Sam, "I've got an errand to do, an' I couldn't unload that truck in an hour alone; I must git somebody to help;" and he passed on into the fort.

Delivering his message, he hastened to Gen. Foster, to ask what he should do with the rebel behind the cannon. On inquiry, the general found that the wretch secreted there was the very one who had attempted a high-handed crime the night previous. He was, it seems, skulking in a corner of the fort, and after the men had retired for the night, picked a soldier's pockets, and the noise awoke the sleeper, when he started up and gave chase, aided by the now vigilant guard; but despite their efforts, the active scoundrel got away from them, and clamber-

ing the ramparts, threw himself upon the causeway below. He was somewhat injured by the fall, but managed to elude his pursuers.

"Young man," said the general, "you have done well to inform me of the whereabouts of this bandit. We will take care of him." Then, with a peculiar smile, he added, "I wish to send you on an errand to the hospital;" and handing him a folded paper, with instructions to give it to the officer in charge, he continued, "If you would like to look around among the poor fellows there, you can do so; take your time."

Sam thanked his kind friend and took leave.

As he passed on, as often before, at intervals, he was saddened by the anxious thought, "Where can my father be?" He knew that many of the rebel troops had escaped from the island. Was his father among them, or — dreadful thought! — was he killed? Oppressed with misgivings respecting his fate,

he entered the hospital and reported himself to the superior officer.

Sam had much to engage his attention, as he loitered among the victims of war. Observing and thoughtful, he could not avoid studying character; and what a variety was spread out before him!

As he voluntarily ministered to this one and that, before he had gone half the rounds of the ward, he had taken in, with wonderful accuracy, the peculiarities of each.

"All this suffering and death comes of slavery!" said Sam to himself. "An' a cruel thing it is, after grinding down the slaves, to pull ruin on everybody's heads too!" The reflection intensified his patriotism.

One impetuous young Southerner he saw, lying ghastly and groaning on his cot, mangled with three bullets in his jaws and cheeks, his wounds shocking to behold, but not fatal. He had declared, at the commencement of the battle, that he had set his *stent* to kill eight Yankees. Yet scarcely had he begun his sav-

age work ere he was himself laid low. Sam beheld in him a specimen of a class of fiery spirits, whom secession had perverted to its traitorous aims.

But how different the young man stretched beside him, struggling with death,—a professor of religion,—amiable, humble, and contrite; of wealthy connections, he went down the dim valley praying for rather than cursing those whom he had been taught to regard as his enemies. Almost every phase of character was represented by the inmates of the long lines of cots which stretched through the different wards of the hospital.

There was the cultivated, genial man, who had been borne into the quagmire of secession by the force of public opinion, side by side with the coarse, ignorant, brutal being whose every breath was freighted with profanity.

Sam overheard one of the wounded—an intelligent, agreeable Southerner—remark thus to a clergyman,—

“Our army,” said he, “lacks that element

of unity and efficiency which I observe among your Northern troops. Our men are complaining, proud, restive under restraint. They have never been accustomed to brook control. They are willing to govern, but not to be governed."

But who is the poor white at the left, listening so eagerly to his frank and generous admissions?

Why, that is Mr. Dean! Do you not see that his arm hangs helpless by his side? Notwithstanding his first panic, the courageous soul that was latent within him slowly took fire as the battle went on, and he stood his ground manfully. Not having enlisted from choice, he had no special heart to fight in such a cause; but there was that in his nature that scorned to act the coward's part, and as he was paid for standing at the guns, he kept his place, and fired away at the national fleet, until a shell exploded near him, mutilating his arm.

Sam had given fixed attention to the com-

parison of the Northern and Southern soldiers. As the speaker finished, and the soldier-boy turned to go to another couch, he took a step — paused — rubbed his eyes, as if to be sure that he was awake ; for there was his father, lying on a cot, only a few feet distant.

"Why, father !" exclaimed he, "is it you ?"

"Sammy ! Sammy !" cried Mr. Dean, the tears starting in his joy. "I'se so glad you is come ! I was that afeard you was killed !"

"I'm right glad to be here, too," rejoined the son, "but you've a dreadful arm there !"

"Not very," replied Mr. Dean ; "but las' night, jist at dark, it was painin' me putty bad, an' I was a wishin' your mother was here to dress it with some of her nice salve, — she's a master hand for makin' salve, you know," — and the tears began to flow. "Wall, who do you think come jist then ? But there she is, now. I'll let her speak for herself like !" and Sam, looking in the direction indicated by his eye, saw a young woman, neatly dressed, coming toward them.

"Sam! Sam!" cried she, throwing her arms about his neck, "don't you know me?"

"Lottie!" exclaimed the brother, in amazement, as he returned the greeting, "how came you here?"

Mr. Dean could not contain himself, but wept aloud.

"Don't, father!" pleaded Lottie, bending over him, and gently smoothing his brow with her hand; "you can't bear to be made happy, you are so worn out with pain and excitement."

"One thing's cl'ar," said Sam, "we've fell into good hands. These are Federals is better than old friends. They fairly kills out the hate of the secesh with their kindness."

"I knows that, Sam," replied Mr. Dean, — "I knows it, an' I reckon your mother she'd say the Lord he'd interfared for us. We mought be a deal worser off. On'y to think, the gineral saunt off to Piny Wood, on purpose fur yer mother to come an' 'tend upon me. How he know'd where we lived, I can't

tell ; but yer mother she saunt Lottie, 'cause she couldn't leave the children alone, you see. That's why Lottie is here."

The surgeon, coming up at this instant, added, —

"And a fine nurse she is too ; worth her weight in gold to her father."

Then administering an opiate to the wounded man, if possible to give him the refreshment of sleep, which for several days and nights he had been denied by his sufferings, the physician passed on, and his patient soon fell into a quiet slumber.

After a few moments' earnest, low-voiced chatting, Sam took leave of his sister, saying, proudly, —

"I am a Union soldier, Lottie, an' mean to do my duty, so I must be gwine !"

XXIV.

DAY-DAWN.

IT was nearly sundown of a clear, wintry day, some little time after the victory of Roanoke Island. Chainy was getting supper in the cabin of her son Trolo. Hal watched her with interest ever fresh and new; she was father, mother, and all to him.

"Aint supper 'most ready?" asked Hal, with childlike eagerness.

"Dat 'tis, honey," was the pleasant rejoinder; "'pears like dese yer ven'son steaks is 'mos' done; an' Trolo he'll be here right smart soon."

"Dere he is!" called out Hal, peeping out of the door.

The maroon entered, laden with partridges and rabbits.

"Somethin' for you, mother!" was his cheerful greeting, as he hung them up.

"'Pears like you is bound to have plenty to eat!" returned Chainy.

"Dat I is!" said the hunter, "when the woods an' swamp is full of good things."

But the potatoes were well roasted, the ash pone baked, and the steak cooked, and the comfortable repast smoked on the board, when, just as they were sitting up to the rude table to eat, the door opened, and the medicine man, or patriarch, of the opposite ridge entered, bearing a heavy roll of canvas.

"Welcome; you is jest in time. Sit down an' have some supper," said Trolo.

"Thank you; it smells good. I is dat hungry. But I must tell you the news fust. Dish sher swamp aint ours no longer; de secesh is pourin' in thick as toads arter a shower; it's all alive wid 'em, ever since de battle of Roanoke!"

"I knows it," replied the maroon; "I seed some on 'em to-day, when I was huntin'.

I reckon de Yankees got a great victory, an' driv' 'em off the island."

"That's so!" returned the patriarch, "they comed up de canal in deir gunboats, thousands of 'em."

"What's we to do?" asked Trolo.

"Dat am de question I'se been studyin' 'pon," said the other. "'Pears like if we'se driv' out of dish sher swamp, dere's room fur us outside. Dey's gittin' up a colored regiment down to Norfolk!"

"Is?" asked the maroon; "that's s'prizin'. If that's so, I'll jine to onct."

"Glory hallelujah!" responded the visitor, "dis is de y'ar ob jubilee; an' you is jest the man to do the recruitin'. You must go to work to onct, an' call the black men to war!"

"Dish is de Lord's doin's, 'pend upon it!" observed Chainy, earnestly; "de Lord he's made a place for de poor slave, an' gin him a chance to be free. Bress de Lord! dish is his war!"

"Eat, eat," said Trolo to his guest; "the

supper is gittin' cold. 'Pears like dish isn't the day of fastin', though I is too happy to eat; but you has been trampin' through the swamp, an' ought to be hungry."

"That I is!" answered the old man, "an' your supper is uncommon good. But I only wish I war young ag'in'; I'd fight in de Lord's war."

"Old men give good counsel," replied Trolo, "an' there's plenty of youngsters to go an' fight. They'll flock together rapid, when they finds out that they can."

"I'se been studyin' 'pon these things," added the old patriarch; "studyin' an' studyin' all last night, an' lots o' nights afore that; couldn't sleep, I study that much. An' 'pears like I can do somethin' to help de right, if I is old an' a'most worn out. You see, when you recruits your comp'ny, Trolo," — and he laid his hand impressively upon the shoulder of his host, — "you'll want a banner, an' I've been thinkin' nobody but me, in this are swamp, is cap'ble of makin' one. You see,

I'se got larnin', an' can read an' write. Now I wants to know what I shall paint on your flag. When you goes out to de conflict, what you want your banner to say for you?"

Trolo thought a moment, and then, knitting his brows, said, —

"Victory or death!"

"It's good, as fur as it goes," replied the venerable man; then, shaking his head, "but that's not enough. Better die than be slaves ag'in; but de good book say, De battle is not to de strong, nor de race to de swift. It isn't all de fightin', Trolo, that'll bring de victory, unless de Lord prosper. I'se been studyin' 'bout dat, an' I wants to 'press it 'pon de men of war, an' it 'curred to me to write, 'God give us victory or death!' That tells what we means, when we goes forth with de sword an' de gun; an' it's a kind of prayer too. How'd you like dat?"

"You is right," said Trolo.

"Den I'll paint it on de flag," said the patriarch, earnestly. "Good plan to have a

flag, Trolo," added he, turning around to look for his package, when Rafe, seeing his purpose, quickly brought it to him. "De good book says, too," continued the old man, "when de enemy come in like a flood, de Spirit of de Lord lift up a *standard* against him, — dat is a banner, you see. This shall be de Lord's standard against the wicked secesh, who rob us of our wives an' chillern, an' whip, an' tear us wid de bloodhounds, and keep de Bible 'way from us !"

Then unrolling the coarse cotton cloth, the patriarch drew a tin box from his pocket, containing a kind of thick ink or paint, and spreading the cloth on the table, which Chai-ny had cleared and put by the fire, with the aid of a small brush he began to trace the startling battle-cry of the swamp-men. The heart of the venerable exile was in his work ; he entered into it with the enthusiasm and devotion of a religious rite.

It was long years since he learned to write ; he had practised little, and his progress was

slow. But what a picture was that around the cabin hearth fire ! The tall form bending over the canvas ; the expressive face of the dusky artist, glowing with solemn fervor, from beneath its crown of gray ; the little group watching him with spell-bound interest, — this, in the depths of the Great Swamp !

With infinite pains he plodded away ; but the hour grew late before he had finished the one word that was to lead the rest, — the confiding appeal of an oppressed people to the dread Judge of man, that their cause was a righteous one, — their heart-cry for succor against their oppressors. What a depth of meaning, under such circumstances, seemed hidden in that rudely wrought symbol, — *GOD*. On those large, irregular characters the fugitive family gazed with mingled feelings of awe and hope.

One bright morning, shortly after the visit of the medicine-man to Trolo's cabin, four colored horsemen entered a small negro village not far from a fort, some few miles from

the swamp. One of the cavalry was distinguished from the rest by a red sash. He also bore a long staff and a roll of cloth. Two others followed at a short distance, one having a patched tenor, and his fellow a bass, drum. When the party of six had reached the centre of the hamlet, the imposing figure with the crimson sash—who sat like a prince in his saddle—gave the order, and right readily was it obeyed. Rum—drum—thum—drum—thr-r-r-r-drum! sounded and resounded. Now up this winding street, then down that grassy lane, the recruiters rode and drummed. The negroes seemed prepared for the occasion, and coming out of their cabins, with their coats across their arms, fell into the fast-swelling ranks of recruits, their families filling up the doorways and cheering them on.

No young soldiers ever felt better satisfied with their lot than they. It was such a privilege and honor to be recognized as men, and to be allowed to take their place as volunteers, that the countenances of many of them

were convulsed with emotion. It was a study to see the different ways in which deep feeling was manifested. Some looked tearful, some joyful, others wore an expression of gratified pride, — not unusual with volunteers ; others still, were bewildered in a maze.

The red-sashed horseman, — who was no other than Trolo, — now that the nucleus of a company was formed, unrolled the cloth and raised the flag-staff, revealing the patriarch's banner, which was quaintly painted on both sides : —

"God give us victory or death !" — the words "victory or death !" being thickly strewn over the canvas, with little regard to order. The hamlet had only three streets, and some seventy-five male adult inhabitants ; yet, nevertheless, at a moment's notice, sixty of these turned out and tramped in their well-worn shirt-sleeves and trousers, anxious to do service for the country that gave them birth, and which now, at this late day, was proffering them liberty.

The adjoining villages were then visited, and in the short space of two hours, three hundred more had joined the magic army.

Since that era, negro recruiting has been no strange or unexpected matter. Many thousands have enlisted, and fought heroically in the battles of our country, sealing their devotion with their blood.

The old patriarch and Trolo have done efficient service in drawing valiant men from their fastnesses in the swamp. They came most opportunely, as deliverers in the armies of the nation. The gathering of the rebels in the swamp was no feint. They planned an expedition of plunder on Norfolk and the adjoining country, which was effectually checked by the sallying forth of the fearless maroons.

Our characters are still busy, figuring in passing events. We leave Chainy in care of Rafe, who, repressing his martial aspirations, is trying hard to make her happy and comfortable in her cabin, just within the Union lines. Their abode is often the home

of a sick or wounded colored soldier, and the old nurse is in her element, in attending on those requiring her care.

Mr. Dean, having recovered from his wound, took the oath and enlisted as a Union soldier. Tomtit, although so young, has, at his earnest request, been allowed the post of drummer for the same company.

Mrs. Dean has had her prayers answered in a way she did not expect, and is seeing prosperous days. As the result of the earnings of her husband, son, and Lottie, — the latter is a young Florence Nightingale in the hospital, — a neatly framed cottage has been put up, and, in her pretty cap and gingham dress, the good lady keeps her new domain in the most scrupulous order.

She realizes, too, her long-cherished wish that her children should be taught to read and write. A school has been opened in the vicinity by Northern teachers, and the little Deans are making commendable progress.

Occasionally she sees her husband and ab-

sent sons, — as they are permitted to come home on furlough, — and Lottie often arranges to spend a vacation in her now attractive abode, that she may recruit her energies and comfort her dear mother. Instead of the mourned-for goat, the family own a good cow, which they have named Pinky, in remembrance of their stolen pet. A cleared space of rich land, in the vicinity, has been made into a large garden, and, being cultivated by the younger sons, aids in supplying them with the comforts of life.

O wondrous dawn! brighten on to the perfect day; even till all the hunted poor shall return with singing from their long exile in cave and swamp and forest; till the last fetter shall fall, and the banner of freedom shall float peacefully where once were the habitations of cruelty and rebellion.

Brighten on, O dawn, till black and white poor rejoice in the blessings of civilization, and in the possession of those God-given rights of which they have so long been deprived!

